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Parish Teachings.

"Walk about Sion, & go round about her:
" & tell the Towers thereof.
Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces:
" that ye may tell them that come after."

Parish Teachings.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

AND

SACRAMENTS.

BY THE

REV. T. T. CARTER, M.A.,

(LATE RECTOR OF CLEWER,)

HON. CANON OF CH. CH., OXFORD,

AND WARDEN OF THE HOUSE OF MERCY, CLEWER.

LONDON:

J. MASTERS AND CO., 78, NEW BOND STREET.

MDCCCLXXXII.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY J. MASTERS AND CO.,
ALBION BUILDINGS, BARTHOLOMEW CLOSE.

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TO THOSE

TO WHOM IT WAS HIS HAPPINESS TO MINISTER

DURING MANY YEARS,

WHOSE GENEROUS SYMPATHY CHEERED PERIODS OF MUCH ANXIETY,

AND TO BE STILL UNITED WITH WHOM

IN THE ONE FAITH, AND A LIKE HOPE IN CHRIST,

IS HIS CONSTANT PRAYER,

THIS VOLUME

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

THIS Volume is published at the desire of some of those to whom the Sermons and Instructions were addressed in the Parish Church of Clewer. They were not intended for publication, and being now only reproduced from notes taken at the time of their delivery, some apology is needed, as they may, it is feared, be considered too fragmentary and incomplete. Of the Sacraments, such only were taken as bear upon the general life of a congregation. In classing together those which were selected, it is not meant that they are of equal value. The distinction to be observed between them is, it is hoped, sufficiently explained in the Instructions themselves.

In such Addresses much is unavoidably taken for granted as to the ground on which statements are made. It may be permitted therefore to say gene-

rally, that the traditionary interpretation of Holy Scripture, derived through the chief acknowledged witnesses to Catholic truth, has been assumed to be the basis of Church of England teaching.

It seems necessary to say as much as this at a time, when the old foundations of the Faith have been so rudely shaken, when speculation is so rife in every direction, and every man claims to think about the things of GOD as to his own reason may seem best.

It is commonly now said, that corruption of doctrine began in the earliest ages, heresies having troubled the Church even during the lifetime of Apostles; and that therefore testimony derived from traditionary teaching can have no moral weight. The whole accumulated substance of Church teaching from the very beginning is, according to this assertion, discredited to the popular mind. It would seem sufficient to unprejudiced persons to say, that at our Reformation the witness of the early ages was the main ground taken by our forefathers in arguing against their opponents, and was the foundation of all the changes then made; and further, that the test of heresy among us still is, not the Holy Scripture interpreted by our own reason, but the decisions as to Scriptural truth made by the first General Councils.

It is true that no single writer of the early ages can be trusted, as a sufficient guide in matters of Divine truth, but the concurrent testimony of the chief writers, speaking together with one voice as to any particular doctrine, (and such testimony may be found on all main points of the Catholic faith,) stands on a different footing, and cannot in like manner be set aside. They speak not as individual thinkers, or with a private interpretation of their own, but as witnesses to what was taught by the Church everywhere at the time, and what was believed to have been handed down to the different Churches by the Apostles. They speak not of themselves, but as the Voice of the Spirit within the Church spake at the time.

Our only means of knowing, what is the true interpretation of the laws and constitution of England, depends on the testimony of the chief jurists and legal authorities of the successive ages, on whom in their time chief reliance was placed. It is on the same principle that Church teaching rests; we trust to the witness of the chief divines of the ages to which we are directed for guidance as to the preservation of true Apostolic tradition. The undivided Church spoke with an authority with which, since its division, it cannot speak, and to those ages, when Catholic unity prevailed, the Church of England has ever

directed our thoughts. I may perhaps be permitted to add, on my own part, that the uniform experience of years, now past the allotted term of the "three score years and ten," has tended more and more to confirm me in the conviction, that the only true rest for the soul in all matters that concern its faith in unseen things, is to be found in Holy Scripture interpreted by the concurrent testimony of the acknowledged witnesses of the Church's early ages, and that such testimony alone can bring back the unity of teaching that once prevailed in the Church of GOD.

T. T. C.

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SERMONS ON THE CREED.

I.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

"*If I be a Father, where is Mine honour? if I be a Master, where is My fear?*"—Mal. i. 6.

I HAVE selected the Apostles' Creed, as the subject to which to draw your thoughts during this Season of Lent, in hopes that, by GOD'S blessing, it may quicken and strengthen our faith; and, further, that having our faith thus renewed, we may pray the more earnestly, be led to consider GOD more, be more recollected, think more of our duty to Him, serve Him better, and repent more fervently of not having served Him hitherto, as we ought to have done. Let us take this morning the first portion of the Apostles' Creed,—"I believe in

GOD the FATHER Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth."

Look around this visible world. Think what it would have been to see it for the first time,—multitudes upon multitudes of created beings, animate and inanimate, in order fulfilling their courses, full of life, and power, and beauty. Consider too how they are all sustained, year after year, age after age. Whence do they come? How are they made to be as they are? How are they preserved? How are they governed and guided continually?

Can they have come by chance? Our reason tells us that nothing so orderly can have come by chance. Can they have been from all eternity with independent power of their own? We have no experience of any living thing arising out of nothing. We feel also that without personal superintendence from without, created things cannot move, nor fulfil their intended courses. The stone lies on the ground, unable to move itself unless some power from without raises it.

Or can it be, as some teach, that things grew one out of another, as out of seeds sown ages and ages ago plants and trees arise? But if so, who sowed the first seed? who formed the first matter? who breathed into these different forms the first life?

We are always brought back to the necessity of

believing that *some one* must have formed the world, shaped it, ordered it; and that some one must sustain and preserve it, so that it may continue what it is. If we see some intricate and complicated machinery,—a watch for instance,—we are struck at once with the ingenuity exhibited by it, and we say instinctively, "Some one of high intelligence, with a strong purpose and will, must have formed this; and further, there must be some power continually at work keeping it in order, and moving it, wheel within wheel, by wise, careful, and considerate adjustment."

We thus come to the primary truth, that there must be a Being, who is a Person, with intelligent mind, with power infinitely Almighty, with infinite loving care that never ceases, over every object, over the minutest creature that exists and has a place in this wonderful world. We come thus to see the truth as well as the significance of the simple declaration; "In the beginning GOD created the Heaven and the earth."[1]

We know Almighty GOD in three different ways, independently of the Holy Scriptures, which throughout speak of Him. But even without them we know of Him in three ways, which expressly reveal Him. We need indeed the help of the Bible to know GOD

[1] Gen. i. 1.

truly, but there are, beside the Bible, three ways in which we naturally form our ideas of GOD.

First, within *ourselves:* in our own mind, intelligence, instincts, we see reflected, as in a mirror, the Infinite Person Who created us. For, possessed as we are of an intelligence and a will, we cannot but believe that He Who created us, is also possessed of a will and an intelligence. Secondly, in outward *Nature*, in the different creatures who compose this lower world, among which we move. We see the wisdom, power, and care of a living Person, Who is over all, and in all, embracing all, supporting all. For it is evident that without such powerful support they could not "live, and move, and have their being." We see GOD, thirdly, in the order and regularity in which these several creatures fulfil their course, and execute their purpose, each according to its kind, in mutual relation one to another. We feel that a wise and constant Providence must be guiding and controlling this wonderful order of ever-moving creatures.

We are made by GOD to be curious, to desire to know more and more, as we look on the many objects before our eyes. And thus we are naturally led to ask further, "*Why* did this Almighty Person, this Infinite Creator, make the heavens, and the earth, and all things therein?" The answer that at once arises in our

minds is this : It must have been for one of two purposes, either for His own sake, or for the sake of others.

Could GOD have made the creatures simply for Himself? He did not need them. He was blessed and perfect in Himself, dwelling in infinite bliss, in the exercise of all perfection, before the world was made. Neither was He alone. He was not solitary, for there was the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST, co-eval and co-equal in power, bliss, and majesty. He did not need the creatures, nor could the lower world add anything to GOD. We cannot suppose that He made the world for His own sake.

He must then have made the creatures for the sake of others, and as we may well believe, for the sake of their happiness. We learn from Holy Scripture that the ruling attribute in GOD is *Love*. He dwelleth in love. He "*is* love."[1] Now it is the property of love to desire to bless, to shed on the objects of its affections delight and beatitude. We are led, therefore, to believe that this was the motive which moved Almighty GOD to surround Himself with His creatures. He called them out of nothingness into life, into innumerable forms of life, that He might shed upon them a portion of His own happiness and joy of life. GOD "made all things for Himself,"[2] as we read in the

[1] 1 S. John iv. 8. [2] Prov. xvi. 4.

Book of Proverbs, but it was that He might bless them and be glorified in their happiness and their perfection. He saw all things that they were "very good."[1] He "rested"[2] as He saw the perfect end of this work of love. He had thus attained His end. He had formed beings that were blessed, and on whom He could lavish His infinite care and love. He was thus satisfied.

We often desire to know yet more as to many things of which we read and think, and as to which no express account is given to us in Holy Scripture. The invisible world, the mysteries of the life beyond the grave, are constantly present to our minds. The thoughts of man are restless, going forth into the secrets of the universe, searching out the causes and consequences of things. Why then do we find no answer to many such inquiries?

The reason for the silence of Holy Scripture on many subjects of which we desire to know, is this,—that the purpose of Revelation was not to gratify curiosity, nor merely for the sake of knowledge. Holy Scripture has a practical end. It was intended to lead us to the understanding of our duty, to teach us to live rightly, to teach us to fulfil our earthly course according to the will of Him Who made us. Therefore only what mainly concerns us practically is

[1] Gen. i. 13. [2] Gen. ii. 2.

plainly revealed. We are told, e.g., how the creatures now dwelling on earth, the fowl of the air, the beast of the field, the herb and plant, were formed and grew through His Almighty will calling them into life out of the pre-existent earth. We are told but little of what happened before. The Bible starts with the heavens and the earth already made. It explains how the creatures among which we live arose out of the earth, but not how the earth itself and the heaven with its countless worlds, were made. We are told how GOD made ourselves, how He took the substance of our bodies from out of the earth, out of the dust, how into this dust He breathed the vivifying Spirit. We are not told how He made the angels and invisible creatures in the heavens. The reason He has Himself recorded: "The secret things belong unto the LORD our GOD, but those things which are revealed, belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."[1] GOD reserved to Himself what was not needful for us to know in order to serve Him better. He revealed what would teach us His will, and guide us in our appointed course.

One thing further we have to consider, if this first Article of the Creed is to be fully understood. We

[1] Deut. xxix. 29.

have hitherto regarded GOD as an Almighty Person, creating and sustaining the work of His Hands. But is this all? Are we only to regard Him in this aspect? Are we nothing more than what other creatures are whom He made to glorify Him and do His will? It is not so: there is a distinguishing characteristic and privilege belonging to us alone among all the creatures that people this earth.

For we know GOD, not as Creator alone, we know Him also as our *Father*. The first Person of the Blessed Trinity was indeed FATHER long before we were made. It is part of His eternal existence, a characteristic of His Being. He was never otherwise from all eternity than FATHER. He had the attributes, the feelings, the heart of a FATHER from everlasting. That Infinite Person was ever FATHER, FATHER of His Only-begotten SON—a SON of His own Substance and Nature, co-eternal and co-equal with Himself in all things. The mutual love of Parent and offspring, of FATHER and SON, was felt binding the Two Almighty Persons together from all eternity, as they lived and acted as One.

Now we alone among the creatures have been taken from among the rest of the creatures, through "the election of grace,"[1] to share with the Only-begotten

[1] Rom. xi. 5.

SON the position of sons and daughters; to have a share in this eternal FATHER'S affections, in the paternal care and kindness of the Infinite Person, Who is the Source of all life. And while we share these blessings, and strive to do our duty as His adopted sons and daughters, we are separated from all the rest of His creation. We live and move as children of Divine Love; in a temporary banishment indeed, but yet children dear to the FATHER'S Heart, absent only for a little while, until, if faithful, we are taken up to Him Who waits for us above, with arms outstretched to gather us in to a more happy, and more beautiful creation, than the eye of man hath yet seen, or his heart conceived.

There are two points by which we may test ourselves, to see if we are faithful to this high calling. Firstly, Have we served Him as our LORD and our GOD? Secondly, Has our service been of the right kind; in the spirit in which it ought to have been given, the spirit of loving obedience? Firstly, as a Master, He asks, "Where is My fear?" We must be either masters or servants in this vast creation. Can we regard ourselves as masters? We neither are born, nor die, as we will. We cannot tell what an hour may bring forth. We are dependent for our daily bread on Divine Mercy. We have not a single

object around us which we can call really our own; we are stewards only of all we possess, to be used as the Giver intended. We know not what we shall do, or where we shall be to-morrow. We are bound to fulfil the charge given to us: we shall be judged by our faithfulness. Time, power, health, strength, are all His gifts, and we are dependent hour after hour for the continued use of these gifts. Have we remembered this? Have we lived in this consciousness? Have we exercised our powers with a serious sense of responsibility, recollecting that we must give account of the use of them?

And then, secondly, as to the spirit in which our service has been carried out. We may serve as slaves, or we may serve as children. We may take our place among the dumb things of the earth, governed by impulse, instinct, fear, necessity; or we may rise to a higher order, and serve by affection, desire and delight, living in filial relations of joy, of being loved and loving in return. We may make our yoke easy, and the heaviest burden light, by remembering that it is a FATHER'S Hand that chastens us, in order that we may be more fit to live with Him in our own proper home. Or we may fall from this high state to be mere drudges and bondsmen under an irresistible fate. Trying ourselves by

such tests as these, how has it been with us in the past?

Be assured that if we do what we can in a true spirit, though it seem little and unworthy, yet it will be acceptable if done in CHRIST. We shall be led, drawn on more and more into the knowledge and obedience of that Infinite Love, which makes even this earth to be Heaven; and all things even here to be of GOD. May the Spirit of His SON be in our hearts, that He may own us at the last great day of the LORD as among His redeemed, His chosen ones. He Who gave us the life of nature, meant that this first gift should be only the beginning of His work of love. He would fit us for a higher, a better world. He meant to endue us with a higher nature capable of breathing a purer atmosphere, and filling a more glorious sphere, and accomplishing some greater services. Grace was to succeed to nature, and to grace glory. The "spiritual body" was to take the place of the "natural body." The Life-giving GOD was to give Himself forth to His own elect with a more heavenly, a more divine creative power, and in His own Presence His elect find at last their true inheritance. May it be ours to have our lot in that new Creation, and our Heavenly "FATHER'S Name written in our foreheads."[1]

[1] Rev. xiv. 1.

II.

And in Jesus Christ, His Only Son, our Lord.

"*For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be the Lord both of the dead and living.*"—Rom. xiv. 9.

LAST Sunday we contemplated GOD the FATHER, and the coming into life derived from Him of all this wonderful world, of all this vast creation. To-day, as the next point in the Creed, we have to consider GOD the SON, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, as the article in the Creed expresses it, "JESUS CHRIST, His only SON, our LORD." We are therefore still considering *God*. The Second Person is equally GOD, as the First Person.

I do not stay to prove the Divinity of our Blessed LORD, because the very meaning of being a Christian is faith in the Divinity of CHRIST. This is the one distinguishing characteristic which separates Christians from all other men, with their differing creeds. I therefore assume this primary truth. Neither would

I dwell upon His various attributes as GOD, His Infinity, His Omniscience, His Omnipresence, His Eternity. I would rather confine myself to what is specially expressed in this article of the Creed. There are in it two separate points which I will proceed to consider, (1) the relation of our LORD to the FATHER, (2) His relation to ourselves.

First, we have to consider the relation of the co-equal, co-eternal, omnipresent SON of GOD, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, to the First Person. This relation is described as His *filiation*, that is to say, He is the *Son* of the First Person, Who is *His Father*. This is His great distinction, as to His Divine Nature.

We are here, be it observed, going forth into the very depths of eternity, into the inner movements of the Divine Nature, before the world was. It is an awful and wonderful subject on which to dwell, which yet the HOLY SPIRIT reveals to us, as being an equally certain truth with our own birth of our earthly parents. And this further is to be remarked, that as we are made in the Image of GOD, and thus truly represent GOD, so, being born of parents by the law of generation, we represent the mode, however infinitely mysterious, of the generation of the Second Person from the First. I do not mean that we can

gain a true idea of His birth from our own; rather our birth is an infinitely imperfect copy of His Generation. But our human birth illustrates our LORD'S mysterious Generation, as GOD; for it is life in One Person derived from another Person. If you ask, "How can we understand at all the Generation of GOD the SON from GOD the FATHER?" I would ask in return, How can we understand our own birth? Who can describe or explain the mystery of his own formation, within the womb of his mother? As David expressed it, "We are fearfully and wonderfully made." We cannot understand how the body is formed, nor how the union of body and soul takes place,—and if this, of which we ourselves have been the subjects, is beyond the possible reach of our understandings, or of any investigation or research which the wisest and most learned of us can employ, how can we hope to understand the manner in which, as the Nicene Creed says, our LORD, the SON of GOD, became "GOD of GOD, Light of Light;" or as it may be more exactly expressed, "GOD *from* GOD, Light *from* Light?" That the SON in the Divine Essence was generated from the FATHER from all eternity, is a living truth, as true as our own birth of our own parents, but we cannot attempt to understand either. It is vain to seek to penetrate the cloud

which conceals this great mystery, baffling the understanding of all created beings.

But there are two points which it is necessary to bear in mind as essentially distinguishing us in respect of our birth from our natural parents, and our LORD in respect of His Generation from His FATHER. I am speaking now of His Divine Nature. In our case the son differs from the father: he differs more or less in bodily aspect, in features, in mind, in characteristic tendencies. It is not so in the case of the SON of GOD: there is an exact likeness between the Eternal SON and the Eternal FATHER. They are the Same in Power, in Wisdom, in Love, in Holiness. The only difference between these Two Persons of the Ever-blessed Trinity, is that the One is FATHER, and the Other is SON. The difference is in the relation between Them, not in Themselves.

You remember S. Paul's enunciation of this truth, where he speaks of "the SON of GOD" being the "express Image of the Person" of the FATHER.[1] Our LORD'S own words are equally clear, when He says to S. Philip, who asked Him, "Show us the FATHER," and He answered, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me, hath seen the FATHER."[2] Our LORD

[1] Heb. i. 3. [2] S. John xiv. 9.

reveals to S. Philip this mysterious truth as to Himself, that to see the One was to see the Other. This was the case, because the One was the exact likeness, the very resemblance of the Other, in all respects, excepting that of the Generation. That the One is the Same as the Other, is what S. Paul means when he uses the term, "the express Image."

We ought to bear this well in mind in order that we may give due honour to the SON. For we are expressly charged that "all men should honour the SON, even as they honour the FATHER."[1] The Athanasian Creed speaks clearly and positively of this truth, namely, of the identity of the FATHER and the SON, when it says, "Such as the FATHER is, such is the SON," only the SON is "begotten" of the FATHER.

The other point with reference to the SON of GOD, begotten of the FATHER, as distinguished from our relationship to the father from whom we derive our natural life, is this;—the child of a human parent, when born, is at once separated from the parent, separated wholly, not only as a distinct person, but separate, in place and action, as a different being. The one may be parted from the other by the whole distance of one end of the earth from the other, and

[1] S. John v. 23.

even though living together in the same house, yet they are perfectly distinct beings. This is not so with the SON of GOD in relation to GOD the FATHER. "I and My FATHER," our LORD says, "are One."[1] This Unity is different from any oneness which the creature may attain through holiness in spiritual life. What is meant is an actual Oneness of Being. The Jews thus understood our LORD at the time, because when He so spake, they felt He was speaking of His Own Divinity as One with the Divinity of the FATHER. When He so spake, "then took they up stones to stone Him."[2] You will remember how often our LORD repeats this wonderful truth, that though divided from the FATHER, He is never separated from the FATHER. When then we view His generation, we view it as we may view a stream flowing from its fountain, and yet one with the fountain, or as rays proceeding out of the sun, and still in the sun. In the case of GOD the SON there is a constant proceeding forth from the FATHER, while yet there is a constant remaining in Him; you cannot separate them. The Being of the SON ever proceeds forth with a distinct life, and yet always remains One with the Being of the FATHER, out of Whom He proceeds.

Here let us leave this most mysterious doctrinal

[1] S. John x. 30. [2] S. John x. 31.

truth, which, however, it is necessary to have before our minds; and let us turn to what more connects the Blessed SON of GOD with ourselves, for He is also *our Lord.* We do not mean when we say this, that the FATHER is not LORD, or the HOLY GHOST not LORD, for we give the same title equally to each Person, only in a distinct sense the SON of GOD is LORD *to us*, and we express this truth by calling Him "*Our* LORD," thus marking a Lordship having a special and peculiar relation to man, to His elect, a relation which is not attributed in the same manner to the FATHER, or to the HOLY GHOST.

By taking our nature and dying a victim for our sins, the SON of GOD purchased us, "He bought"[1] us. "To this end CHRIST both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be LORD both of the dead and living."[2] I shall have to show how this came to be the case, when I dwell on other Articles of the Creed, but now I only point out the fact that it is so.

Let us, then, view the SON of GOD, as OUR LORD. While He was upon earth, living as man in the midst of men, He showed Himself LORD of all that concerns man. He showed Himself to be LORD over outward nature. Think how the wind and sea obeyed His word. Think how disease departed from the

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 20; 2 S. Pet. ii. 1. [2] Rom. xiv. 9.

body and health returned, when He spoke. Think how devils went out from those who were possessed by them, when He bade them ; how bodies lying in the grave rose up, restored to life, when He called them. He was exhibiting Himself as LORD of all this vast creation, of all things visible and invisible. In like manner, with equal power, He showed His Lordship over the hearts of men. He brought them to His feet to worship Him. He drew them away from their homes, from earthly occupations,—the fishermen from their nets, S. Matthew from the receipt of custom. He drew even the wicked souls out of the depth of impurity, by an attraction to His Person. S. Mary Magdalene followed Him, and gave all her substance to minister to Him. He thus showed Himself LORD of the souls and hearts of men, of the intelligence, of the affections, of the wills of men and women. He exhibited first on one then on another His mighty influence. It was a power that seemed absolute, as a LORD over His subjects, an Emperor over vassals, a parent over children.

In various ways He exhibited this power, to show that it extended over all earthly things, the outward and the inward alike, even men's outward fortunes and inner beings equally. Under His secret spell they must obey Him, adore Him, give up all to Him,

follow Him whithersoever He went. This is the great wonder which day after day was exhibited throughout the land of Judea, as the victory of this new LORD of mankind. It is stated in the Gospel to be His claim, "All power is given unto Me."[1] And the facts recorded prove its truth.

There is yet a further wonder. We can understand a sovereign reigning while alive, and in the midst of us, but how when he has departed to the unseen world? Can he still reign? It is this that really has come to pass in the case of JESUS CHRIST. He has perpetuated His Lordship after His departure, and still reigns from out of the invisible world. His reign was to continue till He should return. He reigns to this hour, and will reign till the end, when He shall appear again in His glory. This is the further and more wonderful view of the Lordship of CHRIST, that it is established on the earth, while He Himself is invisible to His subjects. He has established a Lordship of souls, a society different from all other societies, a kingdom unlike all other kingdoms; having its ministry, its courts of justice, its laws, its rules, its services of homage around His Throne, extending over the whole earth. This is manifest everywhere, as one of the greatest known

[1] S. Matt. xxviii. 18.

facts. While empires have fallen, and kingdoms vanished, while system after system has passed away, and societies of all kinds decayed, this one kingdom alone remains, having lived on century after century, this grand society of a peculiar people, owning among their number the most noble and the most destitute, the most learned and the most ignorant, the highest and the lowest, embracing all nations, and classes, and languages and tongues, and extending itself ceaselessly, so that multitudes upon multitudes everywhere love Him and look to Him, obey and adore Him, as LORD of lords, and King of kings.

Let me point out one other peculiar characteristic of the Lordship of JESUS CHRIST. In all earthly kingdoms, nations, or families, we have no choice as to where our birth, our lot, is cast. We enter into the place appointed for us, with no will of our own, from no act of our own choice, but are where GOD has placed us. It is not so with the kingdom of which we speak, and of which the Lordship belongs to CHRIST. Our lives and destinies await our choice. It is by an act of the will that we become His real true subjects. It is by an act of the soul, choosing Him for its King ; it is by the free choice of the subject soul that He reigns over us. By baptism indeed He claims us as His subjects, and as to this, if it take

place in infancy we have had no choice. But the true subjection of the soul, the yielded will is of our own act. His grace working in us, we too work with Him. He would not be the LORD of unwilling hearts. Not by any fate or necessity would He enslave us, nor establish a kingdom founded on any constraint. Our true LORD has established a higher view of lordship; a more heavenly view of subjection, of the relation between master and servant, by founding it upon the willing choice of loving souls. The glory of the kingdom of CHRIST is, that He makes His servants "willing in the day of His power."[1] The glory of His subjects is, that the service they render, the homage with which they honour Him, is that of free and unconstrained love. He is the "choicest among ten thousand,"[2] the LORD of the deepest affections of the human heart. He has bound His people to Himself by the chains of a most wondrous and preternatural love.

And now may this be fully realised in us; for only thus does JESUS CHRIST become our true LORD, and we subjects of His Kingdom in the heavens. May we be His faithful ones, until we know and adore Him in a yet higher mystery of life, when He shall have "delivered up His Kingdom to the FATHER," and "GOD shall be All in all."[3]

[1] Psalm cx. 3. [2] Cant. v. 10. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 24.

III.

Conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.

"*A Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Emmanuel.*"—Isa. vii. 14.

WE dwelt last Sunday upon the Divinity of our Blessed LORD; to-day I would draw your minds to dwell upon the thought of His Humanity, as it is united with His Divinity. It is often said that a Christian means one who believes in CHRIST as GOD, but this alone would make only an external connexion with the SON of GOD, leaving out what unites us with Him, as our Life. To be a Christian is to believe, and to live in the belief, that our own manhood is in Him united with the Godhead, and that through Him, as Man, we are made one with GOD. As the text beautifully expresses the truth of the perfect union of the Godhead and the manhood, "A Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son,"—a human

Mother has a Son, and that Son is "Emmanuel," which means, "GOD come to dwell with, and in us."

We have then to-day to dwell on this most amazing wonder, on which the life of the Church depends for its very existence,—the Mystery of the Incarnation. We have to fix our mind's eye on this the greatest event since the creation of the world. And we shall see (if saved by Him) in the glory of Heaven, the very Son of Man, the visible, palpable, real form of a Man, and that Man, GOD.

The wonder is, that it was possible that He should dwell on the earth like one of us, that He should walk in the pleasant fields, in the streets of the city, and look with human eyes on mountain, and river, and lake, and valley, and take pleasure in the flowers of the field, and make His home in human habitations, and gaze upon the face of mother, and sisters, and brothers, and friends, and yet be truly and really GOD. Wonderful it is to think, that He should perform the acts of man, and speak with the voice and the language of man ; that He should bear what we in our necessities bear,—cold, hunger, roughness, sorrow, pain, and at last the pangs of death ; that He should have a body and a soul exactly like our own.

There are, however, two momentous differences,

which we must carefully mark. His body, like our own in all other respects, differed from it in this, that there was no defect, and could be no disease in it. He died not from any disease, but by His own will, giving up His Soul to His FATHER, as the Victim for sin. And there was no defect. It has ever been believed that JESUS was the fairest of men, the "choicest among ten thousand." When Isaiah says, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him,"[1] he is speaking of the effects of the dreadful Passion that He endured,—the gashes on the back, the brow torn by the thorns, the smiting and shameful spitting on the face, and the great drops of the precious Blood, shed during the many hours that His Passion continued, with all its agony convulsing and dishonouring His sacred Body. But it was not so before the Passion began.

His Soul, too, was just like our own, with all its parts, properties, functions, impulses, only with this great exception, that there was no liability to sin, no possibility of the slightest evil, no faultiness.

Some have held, indeed even in our own day there is a sect which teaches, that though JESUS CHRIST was without sin, He was capable of sin. Such a be-

[1] Isa. liii. 2.

lief is contrary to what has been always held as the traditionary teaching of the Catholic Church, and is a great dishonour to our LORD. It has been believed that on this account He could do no sin, because His Soul and His Body alike were united to His Godhead. For even when His Body lay in the tomb, and His Soul went to the place of the departed, His Godhead remained unchangeably united to both. He was "tempted like as we are,"[1] and bore the strain and misery of temptation, but the powers of evil had no part in Him.

With these two exceptions, the SON of GOD was like to other men, and as men were formed in His image in the beginning of the creation, so we may say humbly and reverently, that when He was born in the flesh of His Mother, He was born in *our* image, like to us, His brethren in the flesh.

It may be asked, how can we understand or realise such a marvellous truth? As an answer to this question, let us put to ourselves another difficulty, which lies nearer home. Can we understand how our own soul and body are united; how an immaterial and a material substance can become one being? If we sleep or wake, walk or rest, think of it or no, there is no difference; all the while this spiritual imma-

[1] Heb. iv. 15.

terial substance of our soul is inextricably united with this visible frame, this fleshly form. Where is the soul? How does it work and move in us? We cannot say. You touch the body, and the soul feels it; the soul thinks and wills, and it moves the body. The invisible will moves our arms, fingers, limbs, instantly and almost unconsciously. The mind, which grasps all truth, and embraces all science, speaks through the lips. The love of the heart shows itself in the kindling of the eye, and the warm grasp of the hand. Can you distinguish and explain how the invisible presence of the soul is united with the body, and acts through, and with the body?

Or, to rise to a yet higher reality, the HOLY GHOST dwells in us,—not indeed as He dwells in CHRIST, One with Him, but as a superadded grace, through mercy, as the Soul of our soul, the Spirit of our spirit. S. Paul says that the HOLY GHOST is *in* the body. This it is that makes the sanctity of the human body, that the body is "the temple of the HOLY GHOST."[1] Can we explain how the Divine Spirit is in the spirit of man, or in the soul of man, or in the body of man? Can we understand it in the least? Surely not. It is no wonder therefore that we are unable to explain or to realise to ourselves the higher mystery, how

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 19.

GOD took our nature and united it to Himself, to abide in it for evermore. We can only say, as in the great Creed ascribed to S. Athanasius, "As the soul and flesh is one man, so GOD and Man is One CHRIST."

Hence we see how it is that the Body of CHRIST when we receive It really and truly in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, is a living thing and a living power. It is because His Godhead is united with His Body, and in giving His Body He gives the life which is in His Godhead. Here we see how His Precious Blood in Absolution cleanses the soul of man, and not only cleanses from sin, but has a vivifying, sanctifying power. The washing of the soul with the Precious Blood is through the sanctifying power of the Godhead. When S. Peter says, our glory is that we are "partakers of the Divine Nature,"[1] he does not mean that we are partakers of the Essential Godhead, but that we are partakers of the Humanity of JESUS CHRIST, and that through His Humanity we partake of His Godhead, that is to say, of the virtue, life, and powers that are in His Godhead, and which are diffused through His Manhood, and so are communicated to us.

And now, further, think of her who gave Him birth. How shall we think of her, His human

[1] 2 S. Pet. i. 4.

Mother? There are those who have thought what is surely most unworthy of her, I was about to say, the shameful thought, that she, who gave birth to GOD, gave birth to other children afterwards. But this is not the Catholic faith. We know of Mary, the Mother of JESUS, only as a Virgin. A Virgin before the birth of CHRIST; a Virgin during the birth of CHRIST; and a Virgin after the birth of CHRIST; her virginity preserved in some mysterious and marvellous manner during the overshadowing of the HOLY GHOST. Nothing is impossible with GOD, and as His Body found at the Resurrection a way through the rock-closed tomb, and entered the upper chamber while the doors remained shut, so His Mother remained a Virgin while she gave Him forth to the world. And so the Church has always loved to use the term, Ever-Virgin, as alone truly descriptive of her. She has ever been regarded, as it is so beautifully represented in the Canticles, "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed;"[1] a "garden" into which none could enter, a "fountain" whose living waters are hidden—mystical representations which have been thought to typify the closed womb, the unbroken, virginal chastity which gave birth to the SON of GOD She never

[1] Cant. iv. 12.

"knew"[1] man, and S. Joseph was equally a virgin together with the Mother of our LORD.

It is a subject of great regret that in a large portion of the Western Church there is an undue exaltation of the Blessed Virgin, a worship paid to her that has no warrant and was unknown in the earlier ages of the Church, from a belief that she was immaculately conceived. Not, that she did no sin, for that has always been believed, but, that she was conceived immaculately like her Divine Son—thus giving to a creature what has been esteemed, and rightly esteemed to be, the sole prerogative of Godhead. One consequence of this undue exaltation has been a sad reaction. The fear of this error has led many to deny her the honour justly due to her, and always paid to her in the early Church, as the Mother of our LORD. We know indeed that she needed a SAVIOUR, as she says herself in the Magnificat, "My soul doth magnify the LORD, and my spirit hath rejoiced in GOD, my SAVIOUR." And so far she shares the same lot with us. But there is at the same time a peculiar dignity which places her in the highest rank, nearest of all the creatures to our LORD, and inconceivably blest, kept so pure from all stain of actual sin, that she might be the Mother of GOD, His nurse, the teacher of His infancy, the guide of His

[1] Gen. iv. 1.

youth, the comforter of all His advancing and matured life. His last care, when dying on the Cross, was to provide for her an earthly stay in the support of His most loved disciple. To S. John He said, "Behold thy mother," as to her, "Woman, behold thy son." The Blessed Virgin may thus be regarded by us in a mystical relationship, as mother; because she is the Mother of Him Who unites us to Himself as members of the one Holy Family in heaven and earth, and in Whom we all are brethren.

Let us dwell on one thought that specially characterises the Humanity of our Blessed LORD. Through His taking our human nature we are assured of His perfect sympathy. You know the preciousness of sympathy,—how it consoles in sorrow, lightens in effort, gladdens the heart at all times, strengthens the will, bears up a man both in enduring trial and in aiming after good. Now, we could not look for this power of sympathy in the pure Godhead. For what is sympathy? Sympathy is the feeling of a common nature, the sense of being felt for by one who understands from experience the trials we have to bear, from being liable to the same difficulties, of suffering from the same temptations. It is not enough, when we are in sorrow or trial or difficulty, for one to come to us who has never known any such difficulties, or

had experience of any such trials. It is not enough for one bowed down by affliction, if a person comes into his chamber who has never felt, nor is likely to feel, as he feels. He still feels a want, and is inclined to turn away, and shut up his heart. But if one comes and takes his hand, and looks up into his face, who has gone through just the same sorrow, experienced the same affliction, knows without being told what he is undergoing, and speaks of the trial as one who understands it—what an intense relief! what an unspeakable happiness! How eagerly will the sufferer let weigh upon another a portion of the gloom that in his loneliness has weighed down his own soul. It is the effect of *sympathy*.

GOD seems far from us, in not having our own nature, not having passed through this world, and not having had the same temptations. We rightly look to Him as GOD, and plead our cause, and ask Him for relief. But there can be no such bond as a common consciousness, of terror or distress, of anxiety or shame, or pain, as a thing actually felt by Him.

But when GOD took our nature, and exposed Himself to all the same trials, and had in Himself the weakness as well as the strength of man, and was afflicted beyond other men, and had a wounded Heart, and a Body feeling at every pore the pains of this

fallen state, feeling from the very delicacy of His perfect Humanity infinitely more than we feel, "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin,"—when we realise His Presence, and know that He has come to us, and walks by our side, looks at us Face to face, and touches us with His unseen Hand,—when He assures us, with His own unutterably sweet voice, "It is I—I bear your griefs; I carry your sorrows," with the voice of a man, with the face of a man, with the wounded heart of a man, with the lacerated brow of a man, with all the affections of His human Soul still within Him, never forgetting what He has endured and felt,—then indeed it is a different thing. Then we are able to understand the words, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He bears us in His Heart in Heaven even now, with that sympathising love.

Let us therefore take up the heavy burden of the Cross with more manfulness and patience and resolution, while we feel that He is by our side, Who bore it up the hill of Calvary and sank beneath it, but only to rise again. Our blessed assurance is, "we have not an High Priest, that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." "Let us therefore come boldly

to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."[1]

Let us realise that we have a Brother, as our Mediator and our GOD, to be trusted, to be felt ever near in the fulness of His compassionate sympathy, in the power of His human love, as well and as fully as in the Divine gifts which His Godhead ensures to us for our eternal life.

[1] Heb. iv. 15.

IV.

Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified.

"*Obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*"—Phil. ii. 8.

WE have considered our LORD in His Generation from the Eternal FATHER, as GOD, and in His Birth from His human mother, as Man. To-day we come, in the order of the Creed, to consider Him in pain and in death. "Suffered under Pontius Pilate," "was crucified."

The first point to bear in mind, is the distinction here made between two subjects, which, if only superficially viewed, would seem to be but one subject for thought and for faith. There are really in this Article of the Creed two separate subjects; first, His Suffering, and then His Death. He "*Suffered;*" He "*was Crucified.*" We may see the reason for this distinction, even judging by our natural instinct; for who that has ever watched a deathbed, but has felt the period of suffering, the lingering of expiring life, as quite distinct from the death; and this, as a most trying time to

witness,—the sleepless nights, the restlessness, the weariness, it may be the agony, the pangs of distress that those who love the sufferer as themselves are yet powerless to relieve, so that death has often come as a soothing thought after such a period of trial? We have to apply the same feeling to what our LORD experienced, before His hours of pain closed in death.

The Creed speaks of the sufferings of a particular time only,—though our LORD suffered from His earliest days. His Passion really extended throughout His Life, in many different forms. But there were sufferings of a special, a more awful kind, which attended His last earthly hours, so that it would seem as if the sufferings of His earlier days could not be mentioned in the same breath with those which He bore from the midnight, when He was bound in the Garden, to the hour, when He hung upon the Cross. These form, so to speak, a separate series of sufferings, which He endured "under Pontius Pilate," and therefore are spoken of as specially forming His "Passion." And oh! what an awful thought it is that the name of this single man, Pontius Pilate, is to be mentioned perpetually in the Church's Creed, as the immediate cause, not the only or the real, but the immediate cause of JESUS being condemned to death. What a

thought it suggests to us, to any one,—any of us, I may venture to say, for it applies to all Christians,—of a fear lest we should fall away, and become enemies of CHRIST, lest having "crucified the SON of GOD afresh," our very name be taken up, and spoken through endless ages, in connection with the Agony of the SON of GOD.

Having mentioned His sufferings, the Creed speaks of His death. He was "*Crucified.*" Observe, not so much the death as the *manner* of the death, the instrument of death, the mode under which death was undergone. The aspect of the Cross is brought before us. In these days we are hardly in a condition to understand what a death on the Cross implied at the time it was undergone by our LORD. For now the Cross is honoured above all other signs; we deck it with jewels, we make it of the costliest materials, all the richest art of the nations of Christendom for many ages has striven to make glorious the form of the Cross of CHRIST. It adorns the crowns of kings and princes; we exalt it to take its place on the summit of our holiest places. In the very Sanctuary of GOD the Cross is enshrined as the most sacred object the eye can look upon. We wear it as a treasured possession near our hearts. The Cross is full of consoling thoughts, as the ground of hope, the means of

salvation, the witness of Divine Love. We lay it on the breast of our departed friends; we grave it on their coffins; we plant it on their graves. We mark it again and again on our foreheads, on our breasts, as in the Sacrament of our regeneration it was first imprinted on us, to be the sign by which we should thenceforth be known among men.

But at the time when JESUS died, the Cross was the most abhorred, the most despised, the most disgraceful sign, and mode of death. The vilest malefactors were condemned to perish upon it, that their names might be associated with the deepest shame. In the Word of GOD it is spoken of as an accursed thing, and he who hung on it was accursed. "Cursed is every one who hangeth on a tree."[1] It is not, therefore, the mere agony that we are now to contemplate, not merely the aching Head, the parched Mouth, the lacerated Flesh, the Cheeks streaming with blood. Beyond this,—far beyond this,—is the humiliation, the scorn, the curse; the thought that the eyes of all men rested with horror on Him Who so far humbled Himself as *thus* to die, to be thus "obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."[2]

There are two points I would lead you specially to dwell upon. One, the pain of the suffering. The

[1] Gal. iii. 13. [2] Phil. ii. 8.

other, the mystery of its atoning power. First, many of us must have thought at times, "Is it true that His pain was real?" "Did it make no difference that the Godhead was in union with the Manhood in CHRIST JESUS?" "This ceaseless union actively maintained at all moments of His earthly existence, did it not save Him in some measure from the weariness, the pain, the sensation of the agony, from the interior desolation of the abandoned soul?" We find in the Scriptures an answer to such a doubt as this. One of the commonest feelings of man in his infirmity, is to be weary during journeying in the heat of the day. Was the Son of Man spared this? No. "JESUS, being wearied, sat thus on the well."[1] We should have thought the cravings of hunger were too low, too ordinary a trial for Him. No. He sustained miraculously a long fast, but He hungered after it as a consequence of it, and this to such a degree, that Satan believed he could make Him disobey the FATHER in order to satisfy His need, and tempted Him with this view, to "command the stones to be made bread."

We are, therefore, prepared, when we see Him equally as ourselves enduring the sensation of weariness and the keen cravings of appetite, to believe that

[1] S. John iv. 6.

when the hour of the worst suffering was come, He suffered in a real sense. Moreover, did not our LORD in the hour of His agony fall prostrate on the ground? Was not His whole bodily frame convulsed by the gushing out of His Blood? Did not this Blood flow from the convulsions of His heart, not from any external wound, but through the intensity of the anguish of His Soul? Did not the dreadful oppression weigh in a terrible reality on Him, when He cried out in the most earnest prayer ever offered on earth, "FATHER, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me?" Did He not faint on the way to Calvary again and again beneath the weight of the Cross, and amid the execrations of those who dragged Him there? We believe that it was not for Him to speak or complain of what He underwent in secret, yet when He hung on the Cross, the intensity of the pain was so great, the parching thirst so extreme, that it wrung from Him the expression,—it was no more but just the expression,—of His suffering, "I thirst." And in the darkest hours of the Cross, when all powers seemed against Him, He cried out, "My GOD, My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He must have felt the utter desolation. Surely we cannot be mistaken at these sure signs of the interior agony of His Soul, equally as of the exterior agony of His flesh. Surely

these expressions bear witness. And since the excess of the suffering was revealed from what He felt within, forced from Him by its greatness, we may naturally draw the conclusion, that He felt as true man would feel, that He endured as any one of the same nature would have to endure, though He alone was as "a Lamb led to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth."[1]

Rather we must believe, as we know that the nerves of the bodily frame, when most exquisitely strung, feel the most, so, since His bodily frame was most perfect, most fine and delicate, that every wound, and blow, and gash in His sacred Body must have caused Him the intenser agony. And so likewise of His Soul. As He looked up to Heaven and uttered His bitter cry, as, to use the Prophet's words, He would have said, "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow,"[2] every sufferer beholding Him may feel, "There was One Who suffered more than I; One Who has tasted what I endure, and more; and this sympathy He gained by what He bore for me; during those long hours of His silent woe." It was not His Godhead, *that* could not suffer, it was His true Manhood, true in what He endured, equally as in what He spoke or did.

[1] Isaiah liii. 7. [2] Lam. i. 12.

The other point which may have been felt as a difficulty is this, "Can it be really according to the laws of GOD, that one should suffer for another? that one thus dying could be substituted for another, to save that other?" In order to answer this question, we have to consider, what experience teaches us, as well as what the Scriptures teach us, and see how the two witnesses coincide.

It is one of the commonest events in this life, that the innocent should suffer for the guilty. The innocent child suffers for the profligate parent; the innocent wife for the brutal husband. The most tender-hearted, the most loving of the family suffers far more than the ill-conducted one, careless of the misery he has brought on a happy home. Does not the whole human race suffer for the sin of our first parents? And are there not innumerable examples of those who share others' ills and sicknesses, who would, or who actually do, lay down their lives for their fellow-men?

We see this law prevailing everywhere in varied forms. The Death of CHRIST was according to the same law, though applied in a more mysterious and wonderful way. For observe, the SON of GOD became as one of us, a brother of our race, a Son of a human Mother, as the greatest of us, as our Represen-

tative, as our Head. And as all mankind fell through the first Adam, inheriting his sin, so mankind was to rise through the Second Adam, inheriting His righteousness. The merits of the Second Adam pass on in living power to all the faithful of His race, unto life, as the demerits of the first Adam passed on all, unto death. And while He became the Representative of His race, and the Substitute for His race, His Divine Nature gave to His precious Blood a virtue which could not be in His Humanity in itself. It was because He was infinite GOD, as well as Man, that the merit of His suffering Death was greater than all the evil that burdened the world; rich with the overabounding preciousness of GOD offering Himself unto GOD. His death because of His Godhead extended to the acts and sufferings of His Manhood, and when, as a Victim, He died for us, and is accepted in our stead of the FATHER, His Offering prevails over all guilt of sin, all power of death, because His Godhead is there, ever giving forth an eternal value to His Offering.

There is one point of great moment with regard to our LORD'S Sufferings and Death, which ought to impress on our mind a great moral lesson, a most important precept. What marked our LORD'S dying, and gave to it its most precious value, was its *willing-*

ness. He offered Himself, and died willingly,—it was a voluntary act. Had He been bound, and unable to escape, it would have been no real Sacrifice. It would have been His destiny, and we should have pitied the hardness and severity of His sufferings. But because He had power to escape, and needed not to have endured them, this invests His sufferings with all their value, as a meritorious gift, as willing acts of Divinest love. You remember how He said, "I have power to lay down My life,"[1] and how in prophecy He spoke, as in the fortieth Psalm, "I come to do Thy will, O My GOD, I am content to do it."[2] And our LORD showed that He possessed this power at the time. You will remember how the soldiers fell prostrate before Him, and did not dare, till He allowed it, to approach and bind Him, and lead Him away. Again, He said to them, "Thinkest thou that I cannot pray to My FATHER, and He will presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?"[3] If He had spoken the word, He would have been at that moment free. All through His Passion He was expressing the fact of His *willingness*, of His being a voluntary Sacrifice, of a self-abandoned love; giving Himself to bear

[1] S. John x. 18.

[2] Psalm xl. 10.

[3] S. Matt. xxvi. 53.

what He need not have borne, what He took upon Himself intentionally, for the purpose of offering a Sacrifice, to save the race whose flesh and blood, of His own will and desire to save, He shared.

And here we see a precept and an example of the utmost moment to be carried out in our daily life. For what is the virtue of what we can do, one for another,—the little sacrifices, the yieldings of the will, the small unselfishnesses,—what are they if there be not the willing mind, the anxious love for other's good? Do you not remember the precept, "Bear ye one another's burdens?" It must be in kindness, in willingness, in cheerfulness, for *so* only ye "fulfil the law of CHRIST."[1]

How can any one fulfil the law of CHRIST, if the heart is not in the act? if the will is not in it? Without the willingness the act has no virtue, no meaning, no, not even if we were called to "lay down our lives for the brethren." Ordinarily the calls from GOD to exhibit this Mind of CHRIST come to us in little actions,—to bear the common infirmities of others, to put ourselves to small inconveniences, to be patient with like failings and faults as our own. Every day, in every home, circumstances are so ordered that opportunities for such unselfishness continually occur.

[1] Gal. vi. 2.

Not an hour passes but the call comes, thus to exhibit the Mind of CHRIST. And what a wondrous blessing it is, that in these daily acts of sacrifice we can exercise the whole virtue of the Cross, though it be even in the commonest trifles of the passing hour.

While then we trust in our LORD'S Death, and anchor our soul's hope in the Heart that gave Its life-Blood as the Sacrifice, remember that there cannot be truth in the hope, or lively power in the faith, unless we strive continually to carry about this same spirit in our lives, endeavouring to imitate Him, and associating our actions with His, and to be to others what He has been to us, so that thus made one with Him here, we may be owned by Him at the last day, as truly His for ever, in His glory that fadeth not away.

V.

Dead, and buried; He descended into hell.

"*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*"—1 Cor. xv. 55.

LAST Sunday we were considering our LORD'S sufferings and His atoning Death. We have to-day, in following the order of the Creed, to go with the two Marys, and watch beside the grave where JESUS lay. After the act of faith in His Crucifixion, there follows in the Creed an act of faith in His Burial, "*Buried, and descended into hell.*" It would have seemed at first sufficient to say that He had *died*, that the great Sacrifice was finished, though He had to ascend up into Heaven to present It to the FATHER—to complete the act of offering His Sacrifice, that It might give forth Its saving power.

Why should there be this distinct act of faith in His Burial? There are cogent and touching reasons. First, our LORD'S Burial shows that His Death was

like the death of other men of whom He was the Representative, that His Body was a real Body subject to the same laws as other human bodies, and like them to be laid after death in the cold dank earth.

This act of faith was especially necessary in the early days of the Church, since there was then a heresy, which taught that our LORD had not taken a real Body, but only a phantom body, and taken it only for a time to lay it aside again, when He had accomplished the purpose for which it was needed, as a man might put on and lay aside his cloak. In other ways in later ages, other heretics have tried to get rid of the great mystery of our LORD'S Incarnation, believing in His Godhead, but denying His real Manhood. They could not trust the power, or the love of GOD in accomplishing for love of man so stupendous a mystery.

But if the Body of JESUS had not been a real body, substantial, visible, tangible, as ours, He would not have been the Representative and Redeemer of our fallen race; the Incarnation would not have been a true taking of our nature, nor He a real Victim for man in body and in soul alike, bearing the burden of His fellow-men.

Again, it is remarkable in the history of our LORD'S Burial, that a tomb seems, as if by chance, to have

been prepared for Him, close by the spot on which He died, as though the abode of the dead awaited His coming. And there was indeed a prophecy of our LORD going down to that lower world, as there had been prophecies of His coming into this upper world, and that He had a work to do among the dead, as He had a work to do among the living.

But first note the beautiful and touching way in which our LORD'S Burial sanctifies every place where the bodies of His faithful may be laid. For His seemed but an accidental tomb in a garden, and so sanctifies not merely our fixed burying places, but in every place the simplest spot wherever His elect may be laid to rest; the tomb of the wandering traveller,—the grave of the missionary in Central Africa,—the last narrow resting place of many a brave man, laid hurriedly in a battle-field, or one dying on board ship, committed to the vast deep sea,—or one perishing in some dire explosion and entombed in the bowels of the earth. Every chance resting-place of the dead, who die in the LORD in far-off lands, and cannot be laid as we all instinctively desire to rest in some quiet churchyard, under the walls of the sanctuary where we have worshipped, and where the faithful are gathered together as one family,—is sanctified by the tomb of JESUS. Every even accidental grave is sanctified by

the fact, that the SON of GOD was laid in His grave outside the walls of the city, in a garden, close by His Cross.

There is another reason for noting the fact of His burial. Our LORD would not have passed through all the scenes of trial, sorrow, and woe, to which man is subject, unless He had had a burial, and been carried by the hands of mourners to His tomb, in the winding-sheet that shrouds the dead. Of all the scenes of human life, *this* is the most touching, the most full of the sense of bereavement. It is not the pangs of the last sickness, while the loved one is still with us to be cared for, it is not the actual parting, while we listen to the last hard breathing, and see the quiet shadows pass over the face, in the features of which we had watched the struggle and the helpless weariness,—not all this forms the saddest stroke. It is not the last death-sleep on the accustomed bed, while the lights are burning and beautiful flowers, it may be, are spread around, that touches us most keenly, for the face still looks as if it lived, the eyes as if they would again open, the expression of the countenance as if it must rekindle, and the smile return. Not all this. But it is when the coffin that contains the body is borne from the chamber, and the funeral procession leaves the house, and after the holy office is

said, the body is left in the tomb, and covered out of sight,—it is then only that all seems gone, and the void is felt, and there falls on the heart the full realisation of what has come, with the crushing, desolate sense of the parting that has taken place, till another life opens before the longing gaze.

And it is *this* that JESUS passed through, this He knew His friends must undergo, completing the circle of trial that He had come to sanctify, and out of which to take the sting, and the extremest bitterness. It is only as we contemplate this last scene, that we can truly say that "He hath borne" all "our griefs, and carried" all "our sorrows." Therefore it is not without meaning, but rather in a very deeply touching sense, that in the Litany the Church has been careful, when we lift up our hearts in earnest petition to GOD, to plead not only, "By Thy Cross and Passion, and by Thy Precious Death," but also "*By Thy Burial*," "Good LORD, deliver us."

Thus far, as to the Sacred Body. Next, as to the Soul. "He descended into Hell," into the unseen world,—for that is what the word means,—into the mysterious world hidden from our eyes, and yet as real, nay, more real, than this, filled with infinitely varied forms and shapes of life and power, though we may vainly strive to pierce the veil which hides them

from our view,—a scene which no thoughtful man can think of without awe, while we feel that we too must pass within it, and take our place in that unseen company. Thither the Soul of our Blessed LORD went down.

Those who have been there, and have returned back into this world, could not speak of what they saw, or felt. It is said that Lazarus could never tell the history of his brief abode in that lower world. His lips were sealed, for it was to remain a mystery, unimaginable, awful. Our LORD "descended" into that secret place which in the old English language is called "Hell," that is. the hidden abode of the dead, the place of disembodied souls. Can we follow Him into that secret region of mysterious life, and at least learn what He there did, and why He went there?

One reason doubtless is the same that we have been dwelling upon in regard to His Burial; because He must go where His elect have to go. They were to follow the path which He trod, and He must go before them, and sanctify the place where they will have to make their temporary abode. We know certain facts from Holy Scripture,—at least so far as concerns the nature of the place to which He went, and how His going thither affected those who

dwelt in that secret abode. His Soul went, the Gospel assures us, on the very day of His Death, to *Paradise*, that is, to a blessed abode of rest, as its very name implies, where the faithful wait, as in a garden of delight, before the gates can be opened, through which they may at last enter into the Heavenly Kingdom, where GOD will be All in all. This secret abode of peace was called Paradise by the Israelites of old from the recollections of Eden,—the blessed home where the unfallen man had his temporary abode ; which was lost by the sin of our first parents, but which was intended to have been their intermediate place of trial, before, having eaten of the Tree of Life, they might pass into yet higher regions, and be with GOD in glory. The Jews cherishing this tradition, gave the same name to that temporary abode in the unseen world, where the faithful, who had fulfilled their course upon earth, were to be more and more purified, till they were fit to enter into that Blessed Home, that higher world of glory, where GOD abides in the fulness of His Majesty.

Thither, then—where the repentant Adam, and Enoch and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the great penitent, David, and Daniel, and the Prophets, and Moses, and Aaron and all the true elect of that earlier Covenant waited for the true Messiah, the true Lamb

of GOD, Who was promised to work out their redemption—thither our LORD went at the instant of His Death. And there He was welcomed by the expectant spirits, as on earth He had been welcomed by Simeon and Anna, and those who, still alive, waited for the Consolation of Israel. In this unseen abode, all the faithful who had gone before, and knew from sure prophecy that He was coming, waited for the perfect Light, and the perfect Atonement of the Precious Blood, that they might follow Him into the glorious kingdom above. They had waited according to the sure promise of Holy Scripture, where it says, "There remaineth a rest for the people of GOD."[1]

Further, we know, still following the guidance of Holy Scripture, that our LORD passed into yet another department of that hidden mysterious world; where other spirits awaited His coming. He went "to the spirits in prison,"[2] the place where those abode who before the flood, that is, under an earlier dispensation, had been "disobedient" to the preaching of Noah, but who were open to receive a greater revelation, when the full truth of the knowledge of redemption broke upon their minds,—those who had not sinned the sin unto death, hopelessly. They were

[1] Heb. iv. 9. [2] 1 S. Pet. iii. 19.

waiting in some penal state, undergoing some kind of loss, some penalty of their transgressions, yet were in a condition to be saved, when a more effectual manifestation of Divine Love should move them, when through the cleansing of the Precious Blood of CHRIST, working in them, they might be fitted for a perfect union with the faithful of our own dispensation.

And such as theirs may be the case of many now, in all parts of the earth, and in all ages, and among all classes, who, had they known CHRIST, would have followed Him, or, who have sinned, but not hopelessly, and thus may be capable of deliverance even in that lower world; not having fallen under the terrible woe of those for whom there is no forgiveness "neither in this world, nor in that which is to come,"[1] such as the traitor Judas, who went "*to his own place*,"[2] having sinned against the fulness of light, and on whom all knowledge, all opportunities, all warnings had been spent in vain and wasted, returning without fruit and void to Him Whose mercy had been finally rejected.

Thus far we can follow the Soul of JESUS, and see how He was employed, carrying on still His work of redeeming Love, and applying in other worlds, as

[1] S. Matt. xii. 32. [2] Acts i. 25.

in this, the saving virtue of His most precious Sacrifice.

We thus see how we are to regard the awful, closing scene of life, which we call Death,—how to the faithful, the dark valley of the shadow is lightened, the gloom filled with a shining from the world above,—how when we lay our dear ones in the grave, weary with their suffering, in what seems extinction, their triumph really begins. We see by the side of every grave the track of light along which they will pass, He Who has gone before on that same road having left on it the traces of His footsteps and of the tenderness of His love. What seems to be darkness is only so because we cannot pierce the veil. To those for whom the veil has been rent that unseen home is the Holy of Holies: and they there look further onward towards that blaze of glory before which all the beauty and brightness of this world pales,—they behold the entrance into that glorious world, where GOD holds His court, and has His throne, surrounded by thousands and ten thousand times ten thousands, of His Blessed ones, the light of which streams out into the intermediate places where they dwell, in ineffable peace and joy.

But yet even there in the intermediate state, which is prepared for the perfecting of the purification of the

elect, there is not such light or such peace as will be tasted and enjoyed for evermore in the end, when the fulness of time has come, and the Saints are gathered into that innumerable company of the Redeemed, when our LORD shall have delivered up the kingdom to His FATHER, and Almighty GOD shall be All in all.

For ourselves and those dear to us let us pray, that the Joy thus set before us may shed its radiance on us and them even now,—that the hope of entering in at last may quicken our fond desires, and animate our drooping spirits,—that above all we may be diligent to use all means and welcome all discipline, which may fit us for that our true home, whither our SAVIOUR is gone before, to prepare a place for us, purchased at the cost of His amazing sacrifice, through His atoning Death.

VI.

The third day He rose again from the dead.[1]

"*In the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight.*"—Hos. vi. 2.

IN again considering to-day the history of JESUS CHRIST, we pass beyond the region of our senses, into the region of pure faith. Up to the present time what has been done by Him, and the manner of His manifestation, has been visible to the outward senses. What we are to consider to-day, and the after events which followed, were inscrutable to mortal sense, except to the chosen few, to whom He appeared after His resurrection.

To the eyes of ordinary men He passed into the unseen world, Himself unseen. I have selected as the text a passage from one of the ancient prophets, in which many hundred years before the event, the Resurrection of CHRIST and its consequences were wonderfully foretold. The words have, therefore,

[1] This sermon was preached at Easter.

a special force, for nothing is so striking to us as prophecy exactly fulfilled, and in this case the fulfilment is peculiarly exact.

"The third day He shall raise us up." The Prophet is speaking of the deliverance of his people from their desolate state, and he is led by the Spirit to make their deliverance a type of the Resurrection of our LORD, specifying the precise number of days He would remain in the grave before He rose. The prophecy seems a very anticipation of the article of our faith, "On the third day He rose again," as the Gospel history records. Our LORD rose to die no more, and we are told why it was He died once, and on rising would live for evermore beyond the reach of death. It was to atone for sin He died. "He died unto sin once."[1] His own Death was a sufficient ransom for all who had sinned, but now "He liveth unto GOD," and therefore, "death hath no more dominion over Him."[2] Thus we see the difference between the two worlds. Sin prevails here, except where by the Grace of GOD it is overcome, and through the power of sin, death reigneth over all. In the world to come there is "no more sin," and, therefore, no more dying, "neither sorrow nor crying," for "GOD has wiped away all tears from their eyes."[3]

[1] Rom. vi. 10. [2] Rom. vi. 9. [3] Rev. vii. 17.

It is this that makes the subject of to-day unimaginable to human understanding, as it is impalpable and invisible to human sense. If the world beyond the grave were like to this present world, it would not be beyond our sense. We could understand it if it were as the poor Indian imagines it, who is buried with his bow and his favourite dog, that he may hunt in other prairies and on other mountains. But to go to that world, where GOD reigns supreme, into which sin has never entered, where disease and sorrow never found place, to go ourselves, with the same nature, the same souls and bodies, only transformed and glorified, the same affections, desires, and tastes, the same longings and capacities of enjoyment, the same qualifications of character and being, only then elevated and expanded beyond what we can conceive, into that region of light and fulness of peace, where GOD reigns supreme, and every one lives in GOD,—*this* is beyond our imagination.

And yet, though it be an object of faith, it is as certain to the mind's grasp as an object of sight, and therefore Scripture speaks of the *knowledge* of that world as equal to any other form of knowledge. As the old patriarch Job said, "*I know* that my Redeemer liveth."[1] The Patriarch expresses not merely

[1] Job xix. 25.

a hope, a desire, an imagination, a thought of the possibility, but he asserts an absolute fact, as sure as any scientific fact, "*I know*." And so in the same language of certainty Martha spoke, standing by her brother's grave, "*I know* that he will rise again at the Resurrection."[1] There was no question, it was a matter of absolute certainty to her mind. When therefore we speak of this future state being an object of faith, it is not as if there were any uncertainty as to its existence, but only that its certainty to us now is dependent on our faith and living hope.

When we speak of our LORD'S Resurrection as being the image or pattern of our own, two distinctions need very carefully to be kept in view, as to which there is no resemblance between His Resurrection and our own.

The first difference is this: Our Blessed LORD raised Himself by His own inherent power. You will remember His own words. As He spoke with regard to His death, "I have power to lay down My life," so also He added with regard to His Resurrection, "I have power to take it again."[2] This was the case because His human nature, in which alone He could suffer death, was in indissoluble union with His Godhead, and as His Divine power preserved His

[1] S. John xi. 24. [2] S. John x. 18.

Body from corruption while it submitted to death, so likewise it raised His Body from the grave, where it had lain during the appointed time, like our dead bodies, in silent darkness. Our resurrection, on the contrary, is not by our own power. We should lie in the tomb for ever unless a quickening force from GOD Himself should awaken us from death. But there is this bond of resemblance between our Resurrection and His, that the same Spirit will be at work in our case as in His, only the power is His, not our own. Yes, the Same Spirit is at work in the act of Resurrection, as S. Paul says, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up CHRIST from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up CHRIST from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit which dwelleth in you."[1] Therefore, although the Godhead of JESUS is not united with us in the hypostatic Union, as It is with *His* human nature, yet inasmuch as it was the Godhead within Him that raised Him from the tomb, the Same Godhead indwelling in us, though not after the same manner of union, will be the raising power, whenever it be His will to bring to pass the spring time of all the faithful departed, to live again in the body, as unceasingly they are ever alive in respect of their souls.

[1] Rom. viii. 11.

The second distinction is as carefully to be borne in mind, and is of equally profound meaning.

Our LORD is Himself the cause of the Resurrection of all who will rise from their graves at the last day. He is the Principle of the Resurrection life. He Himself, through His Spirit, communicates from out of Himself the power of resurrection to each individual person. He is likened in this respect to the old Adam, because life from Him is co-extensive with the death which was communicated to us from the old Adam. "As in Adam all die, even so in CHRIST shall all be made alive."[1] S. Paul thus speaks of our LORD as a "*quickening Spirit*," the One Who communicates the risen life to all who share it with Him. We have no power of this kind with regard to ourselves or others. Parents are indeed the instruments in the natural life of communicating life. Children owe their lives to their parents, through whom GOD imparts life. But they are only the instruments which He is pleased to bless to that effect, they are not the cause nor the source, neither by any power of their own do they create the life which they are the means of communicating. But the Resurrection Life is derived directly from our LORD through His own power, and is thus His own gift, and

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 22.

He is the One Mediator between GOD and every human being in this respect also. Our new life is identified with His life, and this truth of our being identified with His life is dimly shadowed in the text, where the Prophet speaks of our Resurrection and not of His, as though it were in a mystery one with His, when he speaks as if we too had risen on the third day, we, and not He alone. "The third day He shall raise us up." The Prophet's gaze passes beyond the Resurrection of our LORD to our Resurrection derived from His, and he sees the wondrous rising from the innumerable graves, the re-peopling of the world again with the multitudes of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, who, having passed through death, shall triumph in the great day of His power. Enraptured with the glorious vision that will be realised in the general Resurrection, the Prophet drops out of view for the moment the central Person of our LORD, and sees only the vast Communion of His mystical Body. He sees the majesty of the Risen LORD in the members of His Body, in the full result of His Resurrection, rather than in His own separate Resurrection in Itself, in what He is and will be in us, His own Elect, rather than in Himself alone. As GOD sees all the future at once, so the Prophet illuminated by the Spirit, sees as GOD. He sees the in-

numerable hosts of all who shall stand up on that day through His redeeming love working out its full results after the lapse of the many successive ages.

There is this further to bear in mind,—We are accustomed to speak of the Resurrection, as a thing that is to take place at the last day.

This is not the way of Scripture. Holy Scripture speaks of the Resurrection as already begun together with the Resurrection of CHRIST. It seemed an assurance of this great truth, that on the very day of our LORD'S rising certain Saints whose bodies slept in their graves nigh to Jerusalem, arose and appeared in the holy city. They were the visible types of the Resurrection of the Elect, dating from our LORD'S Resurrection. On this account we are spoken of in Scripture as already risen. "Buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also ye *are risen*."[1] And again this is declared in the words of this day's Epistle. The Resurrection, as already having taken place, is assumed in the expression; "If ye then be risen with CHRIST, seek those things that are above."[2] We are called to live a life suited to the Resurrection state. This is again spoken of in the Revelations of S. John the Divine. There are, it is there said, for the Elect of GOD two Resurrections; one partaken of in this

[1] Col. ii. 12. [2] Col. iii. 1.

life, the other hereafter. It is supposed that the Apostle alludes to a Resurrection in this life when he says, "This is the First Resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first Resurrection, over such the second death hath no power."[1] The first takes place through the participation of the life of the risen SAVIOUR, by the Spirit Which is given us, first at the Font, afterwards through the successive communications of grace that follow. We thus are raised above the natural into the supernatural and spiritual state, above this world of sense, of sorrow and trial, to share with our LORD the actual living power of a yet higher world, through an inward abiding gift. And so the Scripture speaks of "life" in its truest sense, of "life eternal" even now enjoyed, not the life of this world only, but the life beyond the present. This truer life is lived here, in proportion as we have entered into it, and exercise its energies, in the power of the first Resurrection. "This is Life Eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST Whom Thou hast sent."[2] To have the knowledge of GOD and JESUS CHRIST, and to have that knowledge as the groundwork of our life,—for what is the use of knowledge otherwise, except to condemn us,—to have delight in it, to grow

[1] Rev. xx. 5, 6. [2] S. John xvii. 3.

in it, to cherish its infinite power,—this is life eternal, and this has already begun in the true elect of GOD. Our LORD speaks even in stronger language still. "If," He says, "ye would enter into Life, keep the commandments."[1] He was speaking to living men, but He speaks as if they were dead, and must begin to live, and could do so only through the knowledge of Divine love and participation of grace, which He would give to those who sought Him. So that in His sight this natural earthly life is as a death, and only the risen state worthy the name of life.

I can now speak but briefly of the means necessary to be continually employed in order to cherish this true life of the risen CHRIST. He has Himself taught us that the Holy Communion of His Body and Blood in the Blessed Eucharist, is the sure means. This is why Communion is required by the law of the Church, more especially at Easter, as among all great days the one not to be passed over. The Holy Communion and the Resurrection are essentially and intimately connected together. Thus in one of the great texts on this Mystery our LORD says: "He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."[2] We partake every time of the risen CHRIST, and as we

[1] S. Matt. xix. 17.

[2] S. John vi. 54.

partake of Him we grow more and more inwardly possessed of the eternal life in the body, as in the soul, in the self-same form and beauty, by the self-same creative power, the like features, the like movements, the like graces, the beginnings of His "glorious Body," and of that renewed soul, in which we are at last to rise up perfected and see Him face to face, "as He is."[1]

It is this hope we breathe by the side of every grave, as we lay our loved ones to rest, that they, instinct with His life and saved by His merits, may be changed, so that their vile body may be like unto His glorious body, "according to the mighty power, whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."[2] But if this is to be so with us we must be rising now "from the death of sin, to the life of righteousness;" we must be of the same mind with CHRIST even here, growing into the very same character, and ever striving to resemble Him in our daily course, as in our inmost spirit.

Grant this to us, O LORD, to the glory of Thy Name, and our own endless felicity.

[1] 1 S. John iii. 2.

[2] Church Service for the Burial of the Dead.

VII.

He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the Right Hand of God the Father Almighty.

"*When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*"—Eph. iv. 8.

TO-DAY let us dwell on the mystery of the Ascension. Though Ascension Day is past, it is not an unsuitable subject for our contemplation, for the Ascension is a continuous mystery. Our LORD ascended but once, but He sitteth for ever in that glory into which He ascended.

When we speak of the Ascension, we must be careful to distinguish between the pure Godhead and the Humanity of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, GOD and Man. We cannot attribute *place* to the pure Godhead, though we speak of Him as specially present in certain places. We thus speak not as implying a local condition to GOD, but because of the special gifts of grace or manifestations of glory which accord-

ing to His will He sets forth in one place more than another. In speaking of the Manhood of JESUS CHRIST it is different. We then speak of Him rightly as changing His place, as passing from one place to another. And so we speak of His Ascension as a change, an event that belongs to His Manhood. He then exalted His Manhood into a higher world, where the glory of GOD is specially manifested, and which we call "the Right Hand of the FATHER." As the Athanasian Creed expresses it, in language that cannot be exceeded for accuracy of statement, or for beauty and simplicity of expression, having "taken the Manhood into GOD," He exalted it to the fulness of union with GOD.

Contemplate then the wonderful act which was fulfilled on a certain day,—our LORD'S Perfect Manhood ascending, with all its attributes and faculties, into the innermost glory of the Heavens in union with the Eternal FATHER. While He is still capable of being present on earth under forms which He is pleased to assume as in the sacramental mystery, to be fulfilled on all the altars of the Catholic Church, yet the seat and centre, the special habitation of His Manhood, its local residence, if we may so speak, His human home, from whence He goeth forth in His Spirit as He wills, is in Heaven above.

Now it is to us a matter of the deepest interest to consider, what our LORD'S work or occupations in Heaven are. Every faithful person who loves Him, and longs to be with Him, must frequently have the thought, What is He doing? what is the kind of life He leads now? what form does the full exercise of His wondrous power in His glorified Humanity now take in the Heavens?

First we must consider that, as we know not what Heaven is, from that very fact it is not possible for us to know in any exact sense what the exercise of a glorified Manhood in GOD, is, or what its wondrous powers and activities may be. Even of our LORD'S life on earth, when He lived in the midst of our natural homes and among our well-known occupations, pursuits and pleasures, how little is told us; how many years did He pass of which we scarcely know anything! That He tasted all innocent joys, loves, pleasures, of this lower world, while He shared our place in this lower world, we may be sure; but little is told us, except the events of His Ministry. That is, we are taught what rather relates to ourselves, than to Himself.

And so we know not now fully, nor with any exactness, what may be the manner of the exercise of His Divine power, nor His exquisite joys, nor the deep

love that thrills through His Soul in Heaven. As it was in the case of His existence on earth, so in regard to His existence now in Heaven, we are told only what concerns ourselves, our own spiritual life, our own peace, our own relation to Himself, our own hopes in GOD. This at least is revealed to us in the passage in the text, as the one great truth to be made known to us in connexion with His Ascension. We are here told that the exercise of our LORD'S Priestly office commenced with His Ascension.

Having traced the life of the Lamb of GOD, the patient Victim, the long-suffering Sacrifice, in His earthly course, we change our view of Him. "When He entered in" to the higher world, He "was made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."[1] Not that He then first received this special office, but that He then began to exercise it, He then put forth its special power. We associate the idea of His Priesthood with His Birth. His very Incarnation was the medium between GOD and Man; and the meaning of Priesthood is to mediate between GOD and man, to be the agent in communications between GOD and man. Our LORD therefore was essentially a Priest from the moment He assumed human nature, but the full exercise of this Priestly power was in sus-

[1] Heb. vi. 20.

pense, till He had completed His Sacrifice of Himself, and entered into the heavens.

When He entered into Heaven with the Blood of His Sacrifice, with His crucified Body, with the fruits of His Passion accomplished upon Calvary, He then commenced what will never cease even to the end of the Mediatorial kingdom, that Priestly office which is here described, as being "after the order of Melchisedec." Higher than that of Aaron the Priesthood of Melchisedec preceded it in point of time, coming forth on the stage of the world out of the depths of the historic past. You will remember how Melchisedec, the Priest-king, met the Father of the faithful, Abraham.[1] You remember what took place at that meeting. It consisted of two great acts, the offering of the "bread and wine," and then "the Blessing." Melchisedec "brought forth bread and wine, and he was a Priest of the most High GOD," and he "blessed" Abraham. "Offering" and "Blessing" are therefore the characteristic acts of the Priesthood of Melchisedec. When then we are taught that JESUS CHRIST is "a Priest after the order of Melchisedec," we know that He is exercising these two special powers, and giving forth out of His continued ministry in the Heavens the living effects of the offering of Himself, and a ceaseless Benediction.

[1] Gen. xiv. 18.

The Priesthood of Melchisedec is higher than the Mosaic Priesthood, inasmuch as it is spiritual and life-giving, instead of carnal, and merely typical. The Mosaic sacrifices were but types of a yet higher sacrifice which gives forth real spiritual blessings.

And this is the special exercise of our LORD'S life in Heaven, and which is revealed for our comfort. While we cannot doubt that He is ever energetically active in the full exercise of His Almighty attributes, this one of Priestly service for man forms a chief part of His work. It is the special ministry exercised by Him now on which we are to fix our gaze, and feed our hopes.

The fourth and fifth chapters of the Revelations represent in a beautiful imagery the ritual of Heaven, while Divine worship is being carried on. It is the worship of the Blessed before the ascended LORD, the adoration of the hosts of the Angels and Saints which surround the Altar of the Living GOD. The one sight which stands out prominently in that vision with which the Revelations of S. John the Divine open to our view, is "the Throne of GOD," and "in the midst of the Throne," "a Lamb as it had been slain."[1]

Had S. John been enabled to look into Heaven

[1] Rev. iv., v.

before the Ascension, that sight would not have been seen. It was the result of the Ascension; the completion of the ministry of the Incarnate GOD, and the carrying up high into Heaven of the offering of the Sacrifice of Himself by our High Priest, CHRIST JESUS. The "Lamb," was the bodily form of the crucified SON of GOD. "Standing," is the position of the Priest before the altar, which is the throne of the unseen GOD. The words, "as it had been slain," show that JESUS CHRIST still bears the marks of the wounds dealt upon Calvary, and that what He was then doing while appearing as "one slain," was the oblation of Himself, of His own Victim-self, in the profound depths of the Invisible Godhead.

There were "seven horns" and "seven eyes"[1] in the Lamb; the "*horns*" represent the infinite power given to JESUS, for in Scripture language, the "horn" signifies "power," and the number *seven* "perfectness." The imagery therefore shows that in this act of His ministry there was infinite power to save and to bless. In the "seven *eyes*" we see the mission of the HOLY GHOST, the "seven spirits of GOD," marking again the perfect Spirit; Life sent forth from and through Himself, the great Gift imparted through His priestly act, going forth into the world in sanctifying power

[1] Rev. v. 6.

and redeeming love and spiritual purity, as the result which CHRIST has gained for us and all His Elect, through the offering of Himself to the Eternal FATHER.

Before and around this wondrous Presence, S. John saw the worship of the Heavens, carried on by the four and twenty elders, with their harps and their crowns of gold, and their vestments of glory, and further off the whole gathered host of the Blessed, singing the Song of Moses and the Lamb, that is, of the perfectness of Redemption, of which Moses was the Prophet, and JESUS CHRIST the Author and Perfecter.

Let us now dwell for awhile on the practical effect of our faith in the Ascension of JESUS CHRIST. I can best show this by an illustration. I will take what we read of S. Stephen, when, in the face of his persecutors, in the imminent danger of a cruel death, and surrounded by his fierce enemies, he suddenly ceased his address to them, and looking up to Heaven, cried out, "Behold, I see the Heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the Right Hand of GOD."[1]

Now we cannot possibly suppose that this was to S. Stephen an unaccustomed vision. It may not have been present to his bodily sight before that

[1] Acts vii. 56.

hour, but we may surely believe that that wondrous vision was a grace given to him, because the glory of the ascended SAVIOUR had been his habitual thought, a contemplation familiar to his mind. And we can understand that vision was given him at that hour with preternatural brightness, because it was to be the strength and stay of the martyr's courage during the last conflict. Nor can we doubt that before that day his courage in many a sacrifice, his joy in many a lonely hour, had been the habitual contemplation of the glory of CHRIST, of our redeemed nature taken up into GOD.

In like manner, merely as a contemplation, this vision will help us all in bearing our trials and rightly fulfilling our duties. To a Priest, for instance, who in offering the Eucharistic Sacrifice, may yet feel dull, and slack, and fearful, through the infirmities of the flesh, there is nothing that so uplifts the heart, and kindles in him fervour and depth of love in the exercise of his ministry, as to lift up his eyes to the Heavens and see the true Priest, of Whom he is the shadowy representative, exercising His office. And likewise to every man in any hour of infirmity, of anxiety, or of fear, to look up and see the incarnate SAVIOUR offering and interceding for him, makes him feel as a new and different person. It enlivens

him, and gives fresh quickening to his faith. Or again, if one would enter into the mystical character of the Catholic Church, the Kingdom of GOD, as something different from all other kingdoms, nothing is more helpful to enable him to realise the spiritual organisation of the Church, than to think of the unseen King Who rules it, and Who is perfecting in the heavens what He began on earth.

You remember how S. John saw the Heavenly, "the new Jerusalem,"[1] that is to say, the mystical Church in its perfectly organised beauty, as it came forth from the Mind of GOD, as it was intended to be in the unity of its spiritual power, as it would be now, if all were true to Him Who guides and fills it, the Head of the mystical kingdom, the Priest-King seated on the throne of His glory, and shedding forth His gifts among men.

And so in all the common actions of life, in all daily trials, in all those sadnesses that come over the soul, in all fears and anxieties that perplex us, there is no remedy that can so gladden the heart and lighten the eyes, as to say, "*There* is *He* Who is my life, gone in before me; waiting for me. I see Him expecting me, His arms are stretched out to embrace me. He is drawing me within the circle of that Home. The

[1] Rev. xxi. 2.

Cross, the sadness is to me, as it was to Him, the way to that eternal, ever-blessed Home." Such thoughts can never fail to gladden and to strengthen. And what more surely restores the spirit of prayer to its true power, when the mind is wandering or indolent, and the whole being relaxed, than such thoughts? or if faith in the power of prayer is dulled, and one says within oneself, "Such as I am cannot find access with the all-holy GOD," what is there that so helps to revive the faded faith, gives it renewed courage and assurance, as to look up to the Great Intercessor, and feel that though our own prayer is nothing in itself, and could not reach GOD alone, He is ministering in Heaven for the very purpose of giving virtue to our prayers, which pass through Him and are united to His, and have only a virtue because GOD sees us in Him, and accepts us because of the power of the Sacrifice which is ever rising up before Him, ever pleasing in His sight?

Even if there are times when we cannot pray, when we can only sit down and wait, still we can say, "Pray for me, I cannot pray for myself, my hands hang down, the very power of prayer is gone from me. But I know that Thy Intercession never faileth, that I shall be heard through Thee. Undertake for me, for I can do nothing myself." And surely in

such as still in their helplessness cling to Him Who died for them, and ever liveth to make intercession for them, His "strength is made perfect in weakness."[1]

Let us hope, then, to the end, drawn upward to Him in Heaven, being made captive by love, and living in the power of the gifts with which He has sanctified us. Let us not fear, such promises being given to us of "entering into His rest," for His rest is the avenue to His surpassing glory, which shall in His good time be revealed.

In this hope, anticipating our true future home, let us pass through this changing, unsettled scene, fastening our gaze on a world that changeth not, and even now full of joy in the thought of it, let us faithfully endeavour to fulfil our course, so as to please Him Who would form us after His likeness.

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 9.

VIII.

He shall come again to judge the quick and the dead.

"*And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.*"—Rev. xx. 12.

THIS is the last Article of Faith relating to the SON of GOD, as expressed in the Creed; "He shall come again to judge the quick and the dead,"—the quick, those who may be living when He thus comes again; the dead, the generations that have passed away, and been laid in their quiet graves, before His coming. In the Nicene Creed there is an expression added to describe the manner of His coming; it is to be "with glory," thus distinguishing that second coming from the first. No longer will He appear, as at the first, in His humiliation, the natural state of His Manhood only being visible, but then will be seen His Majesty, the august greatness of His glorified Humanity clothed with the Godhead. And again, not alone as at first, will He then come, but with a retinue of saints and angels, for it is this living

retinue, surrounding and following Him, which Holy Scripture intends by the "clouds" of which S. John speaks in the Book of Revelations, as being with Him, when "He cometh."[1]

It has always been the belief of the Church, that the Cross will herald the way of our LORD'S return to the earth, as in a glorious procession, advancing from the depths of Heaven into this lower world. This belief is grounded on what S. Matthew says, "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven,"[2] it being instinctively felt that the Cross, which distinguishes Him as the Victim Sacrifice of the world, the symbol of the merits of His Passion, and of the fruits of His sufferings, must be meant, more especially as the Prophet says of the nations of the world in that day, "They shall look on Me, Whom they have pierced."[3] And again, speaking of that day another Prophet says, "Every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him."[4] The remembrance of the cruel suffering and shame borne on Calvary shall come forth to view in the midst of the glory of His second Advent, our LORD'S very sufferings glorified, His wounds become the fountains of everlasting light and love.

[1] Rev. i. 7.
[2] S. Matt. xxiv. 30.
[3] Zech. xii. 10.
[4] Rev. i. 7.

Holy Scripture is very particular in stating that the judgment of man is committed to GOD the SON. "The FATHER judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the SON."[1] Two reasons are given in this passage of S. John's Gospel, why the SON, and not the FATHER, shall be the Judge of mankind. The first is, "That all men should honour the SON, even as they honour the FATHER." There was a danger that men might look on GOD the SON as inferior to GOD the FATHER, because He assumed a created nature, and that therefore a shadow of disparagement might surround the Person of the SON of GOD, though He assumed our nature only as a consequence of His condescending love. In order to prevent such disparagement, this power of judgment, a power which is peculiarly Divine, which is the special attribute of GOD, Who alone searcheth the heart, is committed to the SON of GOD, that all men may honour Him as One with the FATHER, co-equal in power and knowledge. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" is an appeal that implies that none but GOD alone can assume such an awful attribute. There is also another reason given. In the same chapter of S. John it is told us, that judgment is delivered to the SON, because He is the Son of

[1] S. John v. 22.

Man, in order, that is to say, that the compassionateness of a fellow-creature, as He is, when we regard our LORD in His Humanity, the sympathy of One who knew the infirmities and trials of a fleshly nature,—who had tasted its capacity for suffering and the force of temptation besetting it,—who knew the difficulties of the most faithful in preserving their faithfulness under the sore test of the ceaseless discipline of this life of probation,—that such an One might be set to judge because of the tender sympathies of a common experience.

You know well how everywhere the Holy Scripture is full of warnings with regard to the judgment to come, and yet we can never by the exercise of our reason fully apprehend it. It requires a great act of faith to realise it. Conscience indeed leads us part of the way, but only a little part of the way. It tells us that as a shadow surely follows a substance in the sunlight, so surely will retribution follow our actions, reward for what is good, punishment for what is evil. But conscience does not say when, and it does not say where. It may be the next hour, it may be years afterwards, it may not meet us until we pass into another world. Conscience speaks of our accountability, of our being sure to reap the consequences of our own actions, but it does not reveal to us any-

thing of the manner, or the time, when those consequences will be brought home to us.

Scripture only reveals to us the great and awful scene that will follow this life's history. So tremendous, so appalling, will be the gathering of all nations together before Almighty GOD, the rising up of all "the dead, small and great,"[1] none too insignificant to be overlooked, not the least or poorest from out of the lowest hovel; none so powerful as to be excused or escape, not even the greatest sovereign on the loftiest throne,—but all gathered there. All are alike in this, that they must stand before their GOD, and give an account of their "works done in the body." That awful and tremendous scene, in which each one of us shall have our part and our place, together with all that ever breathed the breath of human life, before Almighty GOD in His ineffable Majesty,—a scene so vast, so stupendous, is altogether beyond the compass of the human mind to imagine, except by an act of illuminated faith; and even then not in actual realisation, but only "as in a glass, darkly." Continued meditation, inspired by the HOLY SPIRIT, enabling us to look with the supernatural gaze that pierces the clouds which gather before the Throne of GOD, can alone give us any real inward impres-

[1] Rev. xx. 12.

sion of the certainty and reality of that tremendous Day.

There are two processes of searching trial, between which we must distinguish, which are included under the one idea of the Judgment that awaits us. First, there is what we may call, for the sake of distinction, the judgment of investigation, and secondly, the judgment of approval or condemnation. Holy Scripture clearly implies this twofold act of Divine scrutiny and award, and it is most important to mark the distinction. Such texts as "For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment;"[1] and again, "The books were opened, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works,"[2] speak of investigation, of inquiry, of the bringing up before the soul what it has been and done, exposing the past life, and searching into it by a Divine light shed upon the conscience, penetrating the whole being, and recalling before it all its past history.

There are again other texts which speak merely of the sentence, of the division on the Great Day between the saved and the lost, as when "a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats,"[3] when some

[1] S. Matt. xii. 36. [2] Rev. xx. 12. [3] S. Matt. xxv. 32.

shall be arranged on the "Right Hand" of the Judge, some on His "Left Hand,"[1] which again corresponds with what is said of the names already written, some in the "Book of Life," others not so written.[2]

The Judgment therefore includes the manifestation of GOD'S final dealing with the souls of men in two respects, the one exposing the past history of the soul, the other pronouncing the sentence due to its past condition. From this distinction we may draw the assured belief so full of blessed consolation, that for those who have lived under the eye of the Judge in the exercise of watchfulness and penitence and self-examination, in the ceaseless use of the means of cleansing power, of healing grace and virtue now open to them, ever seeking to know themselves as He knows them,—who as sin rises in them, seek to put away the evil which He hates, and strive to grow in grace and truth, more and more faithfully,—to such, the Judgment Day will be but the sentence of approval before all the world, the witness to their faithfulness, as He places them on His Right Hand, welcoming them among the Blessed into His kingdom. It will be what Scripture calls "the manifestation of the sons of GOD."[3] It will be the sealing of His elect people,

[1] S. Matt. xxv. 33. [2] Rev. xx. 12. [3] Rom. viii. 19.

of those who have already passed through an anticipatory judgment, who have prepared themselves by a constant self-discipline which has changed the terror of that awful Day into a scene of assured mercy, of "mercy triumphing over judgment,"[1] because they have sought to live in the continual consciousness of Him Who "searcheth the heart," ever casting out the evil, ever growing in the true features of the likeness of His Holiness.

On the other hand to those who have not sought to know themselves in this day of our probation, nor endeavoured to cast out the evil within them, who have let life go on, unsearched, uninvestigated, in carelessness, self-will, and impenitence, leaving all to take its chance until the Revelation of that last Great Day,—to them, those terrors will be surely realised, of which we read in those awful statements of the Word of GOD, when men shall call on "the hills to cover them" "from the wrath of the Lamb."[2] For then will be unrolled the Books of Judgment, and the book of conscience for the first time will be searched through and through; then shall there be the exposure of what had been hidden until that Day; then in the dreadful light cast upon a life of sin, and habits of unlicensed and unrestrained passion, the

[1] S. James ii. 13.

[2] S. Luke xxiii. 30; Rev. vi. 16.

unutterable woe shall fall, which spends itself in the "weeping and gnashing of teeth," the horror and shame awakened within the soul, as it shrinks for the first time from the Eye of GOD.

It is needful well to mark this distinction of what must come to pass in that Great Day, both for warning and for consolation. For those who have sought patiently to put away all their evil, before it was too late, and to know the worst of themselves, whatever may be lurking within to be a cause of shame,—most blessed for them to look forward to that Day, which will be to them an assurance of all their cherished hopes, a manifestation before all the world, that they are His, whom He has chosen in the day of His Visitation. For others, the awful words of Scripture that speak of the fatal doom and the sure recompense, are a witness in mercy, as a beacon light in a stormy sea, to warn ere it be too late, that they perish not.

I have said that we could never picture that Great Day to ourselves by our own reason, and yet our reason shows us the necessity for such a day. For we know that GOD is just and true, and yet how often do we see around us in this life what seems to contradict our belief in the justice and truth of GOD. We see innocence suffering, and iniquity prospering;

we see an unequal distribution of blessing and trouble, the most holy often the most tried, and the unfaithful living in perfect ease. So at least it seems to us. A mixed scene such as the world presents, is confusing to the mind, and without such an explanation as a future judgment affords, it is scarcely possible to reconcile it to our ideas of Divine wisdom and love. Does not this testify to the necessity of a time for the readjustment of all things, such as our LORD spoke of, when He said, "Wisdom is justified of her children?"[1] We need a manifestation of power to show that righteousness and truth reign in GOD'S kingdom, and that this present order of things is only a permitted occasion and mode of discipline and trial. This present disorder is but the confusion of a state in which evil has been allowed to prevail, because of the longsuffering of GOD, "not willing that any should perish,"[2] and which serves for the present time as the testing of faith, and the discipline of patience, that virtue may be the more glorified, and trust in the power and love of GOD the more honoured in the final fulfilment of His judgments.

But there needs for this a public manifestation, a visible, palpable reparation for suffering righteousness, as on the other hand there needs a visible, palpable con-

[1] S. Matt. xi. 19. [2] 2 S. Pet. iii. 9.

demnation of unrebuked sin. There is, we may surely believe, a particular, individual judgment of every separate soul, as it passes out of this world, and immediately on its passage, to fix the place and state of each during its intermediate time of waiting before the end comes. But this is a secret judgment; this would not justify GOD before the world. This would not satisfy the demands of justice. This would not sufficiently put to rebuke the blasphemies of unbelief, nor sufficiently mark the triumph of faith and trust. There needs a more complete and unmistakable and overwhelming exhibition of the Truth and Wisdom of GOD, a more publicly expressed reversal of all that dared to dishonour and reproach His dealings during this mysterious course of our probation. The secret witness to each separate soul would not suffice for this. His own honour and the truth of His servants demand a public manifestation, as alone adequate to the need. The voice of GOD, bringing out to view before all the universe the righteousness of His own dealings, and the grounds of trust of His faithful servants, then first heard from His Judgment Throne, will alone satisfy the requirements of this day of trial, before which every enemy of GOD shall be "speechless," and all who have trusted in Him, "awaking up after His likeness, shall be satisfied."

If this then be the truth, of how little consequence is all that passes in this world, in comparison with the sentence, which is to be determined on that Day! If we let the end of all things dwell with its due weight upon our minds, how do the passing incidents of the hour fade away into insignificance! If the end be in view, if the end of every act of faithfulness, every act of love, every patient endurance, every self-sacrifice, every pang of sorrow and humiliation, be embraced by the soul, how little does the burden of the effort, or the endurance of the sacrifice, seem to be; how passing slight in comparison is the pressure of the present distress!

How brave then, how patient, how willing should we be in bearing our Cross; how trustful that all is for the best, that all will end well, that perfect Love and perfect Wisdom will magnify itself even the more signally, and the more triumphantly, because of the passing clouds of trial which for a while have been permitted to perplex and test the faith of His elect!

May GOD in His infinite mercy grant that we may look more and more to that blessed end, when GOD will be in all glorified, that we may more and more prepare for that Day, that it may be to us the Day of Consolation, of endless bliss, of unutterable peace, when

temptation and anxiety will have ceased to vex the soul, when the victory has been won, and love cast out all fear; when there is left only the joy, the endless embrace in the bosom of GOD and the communion of His children, His perfected elect, His blessed ones, in whom He will abide for ever.

There is abundant cause for hope of this peaceful end to all who use aright the means of grace and live in faith. But yet to the very best of us how much cause also is there for fear,—a holy fear may it be,—in the thought of meeting GOD the Judge, Face to face! and all our heart's secrets laid bare before Him! May the solemn thought sober us. May the certainty of thus meeting Him be ever in our minds. May the sense of our responsibility deepen within us. Let love grow, for the promise is to them that love GOD above all things. Let us walk humbly with our GOD. Let us work while it is day, lest the night come on us, when no man can work. So when He cometh, may we be "found watching." And "by patient continuance in well doing," through His grace Who suffered for us, may we at last hear the blessed words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy LORD."[1]

[1] S. Matt. xxv. 21.

IX.

I believe in the Holy Ghost.

"*Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.*"—Eph. iv. 30.

TO-DAY I conclude the Articles of the Creed which relate to the Godhead,—"I believe in the HOLY GHOST,"—a brief expression of faith in the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, following the longer declarations concerning GOD the FATHER, and GOD the SON. In the beginning, controversy had not disturbed the simple faith in the HOLY SPIRIT, and so few words were needed, but afterwards, when discussions arose, it became necessary to add what appears in the Nicene Creed as a further statement of the Truth. The HOLY SPIRIT is there spoken of as "LORD and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the FATHER and the SON; Who with the FATHER and the SON together is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the Prophets."

These Articles were added to the Catholic Creed, after the times of the Apostles, on account of heresies which vexed the Church and troubled the minds of the Faithful. It was to guard the truth by explaining more fully what had been revealed. The earlier Creed was simpler, because then the mere announcement of the truth of the personal existence of the HOLY GHOST seemed sufficient.

My observations to-day will be confined to the fact of the existence of the HOLY GHOST, and the character of His work in the Church of CHRIST.

The HOLY SPIRIT took no bodily shape, no visible form. He is pure spirit, and hence His Name. He is THE SPIRIT,—perfect GOD in His pure and simple Essence. He was active in this lower world before man was formed. "The Spirit of GOD moved on the face of the waters,"[1] and there was life everywhere as the consequence,—life very good, holy, beautiful, perfect; and when man was formed, the Spirit "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." And so He continued to be the life of man until the Fall, until man became corrupt, and then the Spirit withdrew. "My Spirit will not always strive with man,"[2] was the sad sentence pronounced on man's rebellion; and though He still put forth some measure of His

[1] Gen. i. 2. [2] Gen. vi. 3.

power in willing hearts exempt from the deep corruption into which the mass of mankind had fallen, we read but little of the HOLY SPIRIT'S work throughout the Old Testament. He spoke indeed through Prophets and Psalmists. He guided the few who had faith to look to the coming redemption through the Lamb of GOD; but for His great work in sanctifying our nature, and raising it into the supernatural and holy state from which it had fallen, He waited for the coming of the SON of GOD in the flesh, for the merits of His Passion, for His all-availing Sacrifice.

The HOLY SPIRIT had indeed continued to work in the souls of specially gifted persons, keeping up in the experience of mankind the sense of the blessedness that they had lost, and of the powers that might be renewed in GOD'S good time. Thus came the spirit of prophecy even upon Saul; the spirit of wisdom upon Solomon, and the many gifts of grace imparted to David. And so with others who are regarded as the Saints of the Old Testament. But there was no personal indwelling in the Israelite people, the gift of the Spirit was not part of the Covenant. There was no promise. What He imparted were but partial gifts, occasional visitations, just enough to keep faith alive, but not enough to perfect life. The HOLY SPIRIT waited for the

reconstruction of man's nature by the "taking of the manhood into GOD."

The merits of the Passion, the fruits of the Sacrifice of the Cross, the actual union which took place at the Incarnation, of Humanity with the Godhead,—this changed the whole condition of human nature, reformed it, so as to make it possible for the HOLY SPIRIT to dwell in it Himself, with the fulness of His Divine gifts. He came then, but not until then, in His fulness,—He came then with visible signs, in order to assure man of the fact of His thus coming, but His Presence was secret, even as it is now. We cannot see Spirit, we cannot see pure Godhead; only the record of those visible signs remain in the Word of GOD, to attest the fact of His coming for the assurance of His Faithful ones to the end of time.

In our present state, the great characteristic of the Christian is the possession of the Spirit. "As many as are led by the Spirit of GOD, they are the sons of GOD."[1] This is the simple description of what Christians are become, if true to their vocation. They share this great gift through the merits of the Passion of our LORD, and this gift of the Spirit is intended for the restoration of humanity into the Divine likeness.

[1] Rom. viii. 14.

The spiritual man is the true condition of the Christian man. He has spiritual intelligence to discern Divine things; he has spiritual affections to love holy things,—to love GOD first, and others in GOD; he has spiritual powers to subdue the flesh; he has spiritual energies to go forth to do the will of GOD, so as to please GOD; he has spiritual attributes of various kinds which make his character in different forms more and more like to the character and Mind of GOD, Who is a Spirit.

The Spirit is present and mightily at work in all the ordinances and means of grace. He overshadows the font, and regenerates the child. He comes down on the Confirmed, and endues them with the sevenfold gifts. He cleanses the soul of the penitent, and strengthens it after confession. He consecrates the Elements in the Holy Eucharist, and makes them the Body and Blood of CHRIST. He dwells within the body of the regenerate, and makes it a temple for Himself. In all the means of grace it is the HOLY SPIRIT that imparts the gift, and brings CHRIST'S disciples into union first with CHRIST Himself, and then through Him with each other.

There are heresies still among us with regard to the Blessed Spirit, to one of which I would specially allude. There is a false notion that the HOLY GHOST is not a

Person, but only an influence. Now if there were but the simple text which I have chosen to-day, "Grieve not the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD," this would be sufficient to disprove this idea. Can you grieve an influence? Can you grieve anything but a Person? I do not mean that the HOLY SPIRIT is capable of grief, as we understand grief. The Scripture speaks metaphorically. It cannot speak otherwise of the Living GOD than in a manner that may be understood by creatures, but it means that we may so deal with the Spirit, as to force Him to leave us, or lessen His influence within us, just as we might do with a person whom we had grieved, and had driven from us. A child grieves a parent when it hinders the parent's loving work, and thwarts him in guiding, teaching, and influencing his child, as he would. A friend may grieve a friend who longs to do him good, guide him in the right way, and help him in various ways by loving dealings, till he ceases and says, "It is useless, I must let him go," and in grief he turns away. And so a Pastor may be grieved in dealing with the souls for whom he cares, if after all striving he finds no way of approach, and can only talk about the common concerns of the world, when he is longing to enter into things that concern the soul. After this same manner the HOLY SPIRIT may be resisted, and

may cease to act or speak within the soul, when He can make no impression; and this change of dealing is characteristic of persons only, not of influences.

Again, it is not uncommon to say, that there is no distinction between the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD and our own spirit, and that there are in Scripture passages where the student cannot be quite certain which is meant. There are indeed passages, where the question may arise. But there are innumerable others where you see the Spirit in action, and can readily distinguish the Divine Spirit from the spirit of man. For instance, the "Spirit driveth JESUS into the wilderness."[1] It was an impulse of zeal impressed by the HOLY SPIRIT upon the Soul of JESUS, which led Him away from men into the loneliness of the desert. Again the Spirit "caught away" Philip, when he had baptized the Ethiopian Eunuch,—He took him away by an active preternatural movement.[2] The Spirit was personally revealing Himself to S. John in the Island of Patmos, when He showed to him the wonderful visions which we call the Revelations.

These were external influences exerted by the personal act of the HOLY SPIRIT on the souls and bodies of men, and they mark a practical truth which

[1] S. Mark i. 12. [2] Acts viii. 39.

continues on invisibly, as the still continued condition of things. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of GOD."[1] His Spirit is here spoken of as having a personal existence as real as our own. We see the Creator Spirit and the created spirit acting together. This fact is a crucial test, as well as one showing what goes on in the deep of man's nature, when sanctified and in union with his LORD. The Eternal Spirit Who gives life, communes with the spirit that receives life, and by their mutual co-operation it is shown that the person in whom this is realised, is the true child of GOD.

We are made conscious of this by something within us, behind the scene of our outer life, a life greater than ourselves. No doubt we cannot distinguish between the two, but neither can we distinguish between our souls and our bodies. When I stretch out my hand, or move my limbs as I walk along the path, even in these most common constant acts I cannot say how much is the act of the body, how much is the act of the will. To my consciousness it is the act of the body, but behind the body acts the invisible will. Carry out the idea a little further. What I feel to be only a thought, the acting of my own mind, is influenced, directed, guided by the

[1] Rom. viii. 16.

Eternal Spirit Who can alone impart to me what is true, and pure, and good. Again, if evil spirits may possess a man, if JESUS cast out devils from the bodies of men, and if it was impossible to distinguish the act of the man from the act of the evil spirit, shall we not believe that the Good Spirit too can possess man, that the Creator Spirit Himself may indwell within him?

He Who made us has assured us, that He will speak within us and breathe in us, and direct us, and conform us to Himself, even to all that is holy, pure, and good; that we may be as persons possessed by Himself, and then led on to the perfection that He has willed for us, after His own Image, and after His perfect Mind. It is this wondrous union which explains what I have remarked before, that there are passages in Scripture in which we cannot clearly distinguish between the HOLY SPIRIT and our human spirit, any more than we can clearly distinguish between the working of this Spirit within us and our own spirit in which He dwells. And this is the case because the two are so closely united, and so continually work together.

I would add what is necessary for us to do, if we would cherish this Divine Presence of the HOLY SPIRIT within us,—that as we are called to live in the Spirit, so

we may really live in Him. Firstly, we must pray to the HOLY SPIRIT. Those who pray to the FATHER and the SON often do not pray also to the HOLY GHOST. Many are practically heretical in this respect, not realising nor considering that the Spirit exists as truly, is as truly to be adored, has the same power as the FATHER and the SON. To bow down and worship One, Who is so secret, so impalpable, yet so intimately united with oneself, may seem at first difficult to apprehend, but One Person of the Blessed Trinity is in all things co-equal with the Other adorable Persons, and if the angels rest not crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy," giving equal honour to Each, we cannot pray aright, nor worship fitly, unless we pay full homage to the One equally as to the Others, or fail to draw near and ask what we need from the Blessed Spirit of GOD, Who is revealed to us as the "LORD and Giver of Life."

Secondly, we must preserve a sensitive condition of conscience, if we are to be acted upon by the Spirit of GOD. For His gracious influence is by promptings and scruples, by warnings and checks, by suggestions and aspirations, a loving, gentle influence, which may be lost, unless we keep up a pure inward watchfulness. He is the Dove which broods gently. It is in hours of silent considerateness and quiet

meditation, and by secret inward communion, that the whispers of the HOLY SPIRIT within us are discerned. And yet He can speak loudly, and the withering sense of shame, the terrors of the guilty conscience, which visit the souls of men, are awakened by Him to deter from sin, or to cause mourning after the sin is committed. These are the accents of the Spirit of GOD with which He mercifully visits the heedless sinner. But to the faithful the HOLY SPIRIT speaks ordinarily in whispers, and they who lead a watchful, calm, meditative course, advance most steadfastly in spiritual things, because they do not fail to catch and follow those fainter accents which would lead them on to perfectness of life.

Thirdly, cherish cheerfulness of disposition; do not allow despondency, do not let gloom settle down on the soul. Whatever the trial may be, bear up with good heart, for the joy of the HOLY GHOST is a characteristic feature of the spiritual life. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy."[1] S. Paul bidding us earnestly to live in the Spirit, uses a strong expression; "Rejoice in the LORD alway, and again I say, rejoice."[2] "The joy of the LORD,"[3] is the state of ecstatic blessedness to which we look as our final recompense, and the Spirit's work must be the same

[1] Gal. v. 22. [2] Phil. iv. 4. [3] S. Matt. xxv. 21.

in character now on earth as it will be in heaven, though He cannot as yet shed Himself forth within us in His fulness, and we are incapable as yet of thus receiving Him. But the characteristics of the Presence of the HOLY GHOST should always be the same, whatever may be the degree of His imparted gifts. Brightness, hopefulness, thankfulness for mercies, should ever shine even through sorrow and anxiety, and lighten the depressions that weigh down the heart of man.

Moreover, do not doubt but that the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD may dwell in a soul in which serious faults still remain. There are sundry lingerings of the Fall which He endures in all of us, for His forbearance with struggling souls is part of the mystery of His infinite compassion. It is not our imperfections that hinder His work, but our resting content in imperfection, the not making endeavours, nor using means, to amend. It is not the having faults which grieves the HOLY SPIRIT, but the not striving to correct faults.

So likewise be not discouraged, if the work of improvement is slow. There may be sudden impulses for good, which are lasting. There may be sudden conversions of a real kind. But ordinarily we grow "here a little, there a little," by "patient continuance

in well-doing," correcting one fault after another, gaining improvement in faithfulness, and conscientious conduct, and true piety, by degrees. We advance from grace to grace, from one step to another, nearer and nearer to GOD, the Spirit guiding, leading onward. We know not how we grow. We often doubt whether we do grow better. But as time passes, we feel a change. We cannot do what we once did. What once was hard has become easy. This is growth, and such growth is life eternal. And we may be sure, that "He Who hath begun a good work in us, will perform it." Only seek more and more to listen to His voice, and follow His guidance, and thus to be conformed to every indication of His Will, that so you may know more and more of the greatness, and the purity, and the power of His perfected life; that at last you may be gathered into that Communion in which He dwells in all His glory with the FATHER, and that through the fruits of the Passion of Him Who gave Him to us to be "Another Comforter,"[1] you may be united for ever in His mystical Body, as true members of the Incarnate SON of GOD.

[1] S. John xiv. 16.

X.

The Holy Catholic Church.

"*And gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body.*"—Eph. i. 22, 23.

I WOULD to-day seek to place before you the Article in the Creed, which follows next to the one we considered last. The very position of this Article is in itself remarkable. It is remarkable that immediately after expressing our faith in the Three Persons of the adorable Trinity, we are led to express our faith in "the Holy Catholic Church."

It is a wide subject, as you will at once perceive, and only as to certain particulars connected with it, can I speak within the compass of a sermon. First, I would ask you to consider the contrast between the Church of GOD as it was at first, and the Church as it is now; that is to say, between the unfallen and the fallen state of the Church. For as

with regard to mankind, there was the unfallen condition of our first parents, and afterwards the fallen condition of their race, so with regard to the Church of GOD. When the Church first came from the Hand of GOD a power of the HOLY GHOST was manifested, and a supernatural state of fellowship among the disciples was established, unlike anything we experience now. After a short time it entered upon a different phase of existence, and in the course of eighteen centuries it has become what we see now around us, influenced as it has been by the hand of man.

The Church, as it was at the beginning, is described in the Acts of the Apostles as a small company, about "an hundred and twenty" souls.[1] That was the nucleus of the Catholic Church. It spread and increased rapidly. Through the first preaching of S. Peter "there were added unto them about three thousand souls."[2] At the close of the same chapter we have a description of the life and fellowship of this first gathering. "They continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers,"[3] that is to say, in the ministration of the Holy Eucharist, and in other services of devotion. As to their home and

[1] Acts i. 15. [2] Acts ii. 41. [3] Acts ii. 42.

social life, we are told that "all that believed were together, and had all things common."[1] And again, "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own."[2] The Church at first was, therefore, what we should now call a Guild or a Confraternity, so small and so closely united was that first company. Such was the opening scene of the Church of CHRIST on earth immediately after His Ascension, and the outpouring of the HOLY GHOST. But never before had there appeared on earth such a marvellous company. It was the seed, the small "mustard seed," which was to grow into the large tree. It was "the net," which was to gather in from the deep sea of the human race fish of all sorts, bad and good. It was "the great stone," which rolling ceaselessly in its onward course, was to strike down all earthly kingdoms, and subdue them to the majestic sway and will of the SON of GOD, until it became in the fulness of time the one great kingdom of GOD, "the mountain," which ever rising in height and expanding in breadth, would at last cover the whole earth, "the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdom of our LORD and of His CHRIST."[3]

[1] Acts ii. 44. [2] Acts iv. 32. [3] Dan. ii.; Rev. xi. 15.

I have said that no body of men had appeared on earth more wonderful, more full of power and attractiveness to others than that company. Let us consider the grounds of that attractiveness, by which mighty kingdoms were drawn to yield themselves, and submit to that spiritual body of men and women, so that in two centuries it had reached to the uttermost parts of the known world, and before three centuries were passed the whole Roman Empire, which then embraced the whole civilised world and many barbarian races beyond it, gave up its idolatries, and acknowledged CHRIST as its King, entering the Church of GOD, as a body of willing disciples.

There were two attractive forces which were then continually at work among men. First, this company had within it the assurance of the forgiveness of sins. Up to that time nothing had been known of GOD'S love, which at all touched the clinging infirmity of our fallen race, except the ceremonial cleansing of the Jewish ordinances, and it was evident even to reason that "the blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sin."[1] It was a new doctrine, a new idea to enter into the minds of men, that the burden of their guilt, the deep uncleanness polluting the soul's inward consciousness, the sense of oppression

[1] Heb. x. 4.

rising up continually within every soul of man, together with a constant liability to sin, could be utterly removed; that there was "a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness,"[1] that a life could be lived by men, once impure, so pure and holy, that it might become pleasing to GOD and like to the Angels.

With this, in the life of JESUS CHRIST there was a great example of the perfect beauty of holiness in human nature, through which shone the Majesty of the Godhead. Following that example, and partaking in measure of that same power, appeared His Apostles, and the first converts, that little company of men and women, exhibiting to the world a degree of holy living, and heavenly-mindedness, and spotless purity, and peaceful rejoicing deaths, such as never had seemed possible or conceivable. Men were touched and drawn by this. They longed to be as pure and holy and as peaceful. The desire to obtain power to lead such lives, and to know such joy, drew the multitudes everywhere to join this wonderful company.

The second attractive force was its unity. The love that bound the members of that early company together, became a proverb constantly spoken of

[1] Zech. xiii. 1.

among the heathen. "See how these Christians love one another." Rising up in the midst of the discord and hatred, the strife and malice, that separated man from man more and more in the fallen condition of the Roman Empire, this company, bound together as with one heart in mutual love and with a great common purpose, had necessarily a very powerful attraction, and drew men by the force of sympathy and loving-kindness. Moreover, underneath this earnest mutual love a yet deeper spirit was at work, of which the text speaks, which was a secret source of strength, and a purifying principle.

This company was the Body of an unseen Head, members of One, Who though invisible, yet ruled them, and filled them with His Presence, secretly dwelling in them. The Church is itself a visible body, but the bonds that bind the members together are invisible,—the sympathies and the common interests are only inwardly felt. As the bonds that bind each to each are not of this world, so neither are the bonds that bind each to the Head of the Body, to the unseen LORD, Whom the FATHER "gave to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body."[1] In this intimate connection between the Church and its members, and its unseen Head, we see

[1] Eph. i. 22.

the underlying strength and living principle, from which arise that holiness and that love which gave to the Church its attractiveness to the world. The virtue of the Head diffuses itself by spiritual communication to the lowest extremities of the Body, He being present with them in spirit at all times, but specially by covenanted promise in sacraments of grace and power. He imparts Himself, and then becomes their secret inner principle of life. In this power and strength the early disciples lived and testified to the reality of their faith in the face of a foul, wicked and debased world. In this spirit they were enabled to meet the cruelty of their foes and persecutors. Persecution, while it purified them, brought to light more fully the power of the grace that was in them,—grace which enabled not only strong men, but weak women and even tender children, to meet the fire and the sword, and the horrors of the prison-house, and the wild beasts of the arena, and all the violence of the enemy, with calmness and courage.

Such is the picture which history presents of the Early Church. I might have spoken of other points: its government, its ministry, the Apostolic succession, the Sacraments, and the doctrine. But I have rather dwelt on the interior life, which through that organised system in which the Church took its shape on

earth, was newly created, and which attracted the world and won such growing multitudes.

And now consider the Church in its present state, fallen through the corruption which has entered into it, and the sins even of the faithful. We see the mixed body in the net, bad and good,—tares side by side with the wheat, in an inextricable confusion, so much so that we cannot tell who are the faithful, or make any division, lest "in rooting up the tares, we root up the wheat with them."[1] We are mixed together in a way which is often most painful and distressing, which often causes the greatest possible scandal, and saddens the heart of every true member of the Church, and of which each man must have experience. I need hardly remind you that our LORD foretold us in the Scriptures, out of His own mouth, that this would be so.

One painful consequence of the fallen state of the Church is, the divisions that exist. Even within the Catholic Church there are three great bodies separated each from the other; the Eastern Church including Russia; the Roman Church embracing a very large portion of Europe, beside its large foreign Missions; and our own English Church which includes North America, Southern Africa, and the vast newly

[1] S. Matt. xiii. 29.

settled islands of the Southern seas. These three divided bodies have ceased to communicate together, because of their differences, yet they resemble one another and are united together by having the same Apostolic ministry, the same Sacraments, and the same Creeds, and thus have alike the necessary bonds that bind them to their unseen LORD, and so are really one in Him, while outwardly at variance from each other.

Other Communions there are which have separated from the Eastern and the Western Catholic Churches, which retain great portions of the truth, but have lost other portions,—they have exercised a liberty of their own in deciding what they would retain, and what they would reject. I do not dwell on the state of these bodies, I would leave them to the Everlasting Judge to decide, how far they may have been wrong, how far right. It is not for us to cast stones, or to judge one another. It is sufficient for us to judge ourselves, and be careful that we ourselves keep the truth, which our forefathers in the mercy of GOD preserved, and have handed down to us. We know our own truth—we love our own ways; we may be confident that possessing the Apostolic succession of the ministry, the Church's Sacraments and the Catholic Creeds, we have all and enough for eternal life; we have the fulness of the power and love of CHRIST

and of His Spirit. We have many faults and failings —we have our difficulties and our anxieties, but we are grounded on the Rock, and we may therefore be well content to follow the way, which GOD has provided for us, trusting to Him to accept us at the last, among those who name the Name of CHRIST, and seek Him with all their hearts according to their knowledge, truly and earnestly.

We have had of late in the Church of England three great Revivals.

It is one characteristic of the Church of GOD, that it never grows old, that is to say, that it has a perpetual power of revival. While grey hairs are on its head, it is ever springing up in new vigour of youthful strength. This is one assurance of the grace that breathes within it; one mark of the Catholic Church which has never failed, notwithstanding the evils that have marred and disfigured it. Life is ever springing, coming from its Head, and diffusing itself through its members, working in them, ever quickening them with fresh gifts.

I do not mean to say that there has not been loss. We can hardly doubt that through the sins of Christians, there must have been great losses. We have not the same power as existed in the early days of the Church of GOD, when it was united. We do not,

we cannot in the same way win the world. Our missionaries cannot with equal power attract converts. The sins of Christians hinder it. We are a marred body, like our LORD in His Passion; not manifested with the fair face of the beauty of holiness, but disfigured by many a wound. We are thus in a weakened state, with less power of attraction, less manifestation of the Spirit of GOD. But He is with us now, as surely as at the beginning. On this account it is that we after decays of faith can revive again and again, and this is of His mercy, lest we should ever doubt of the promise that He has given; that He will be with us even to the end, that He ever breathes into us His Spirit, and bids us live with renewed life.

Three times the Church of England has been thus requickened into fresh life during this century. First, there was the Evangelical Revival, after the sad decline of spiritual life and faith in the last century, when instead of the preaching of the Gospel, the moral virtues, and respectability of conduct, seemed the chief subjects taught. A general torpor had spread among our congregations, and both Priests and people, generally, though with many noble exceptions to this general decline, had fallen from any real life in CHRIST. Then arose a new spirit through the revived teaching of faith in CHRIST, and of His Pre-

cious atoning Blood, and the power of the HOLY SPIRIT within the soul; and His manifold fruits of grace began again to appear.

Next there followed the Catholic revival, filling up what was wanting in the previous movement, bringing out to view the power of the Incarnation, as a principle of union with our LORD, and the grace of Sacraments, and the witness of the Apostolic Priesthood, and the life of the Church as an organised Body in union with CHRIST its Head, through the indwelling Presence of the HOLY GHOST. Thus the Sacramental life began to work, building up the soul in its more fully covenanted communion with its LORD.

After this came the revived care for the worship of GOD in our congregational services, what has been called the Ritual movement. I do not speak of the revival of private prayer before our FATHER, Who seeth in secret. Earnest private devotion had revived with the Evangelical movement. I mean the united worship of the mystical Body of CHRIST in His sanctuaries. As a separate movement has arisen among us increased care in this, and in the building and adorning of our churches, that they might be more worthy of Him Who is therein adored;—in increased care in ordering the Church's services, as to all outward forms and beauty of symbol, as well as

increased fervour and delight in our congregations. A great change from the irreverence that many of us can remember in our early days, has passed over the general aspect of our Church services. The days are gone by when the very font and altar were a scandal from the dirt and profanations that disfigured them, and when a general disregard as to external forms showed, that the spirit of reverence had departed from the House of GOD.

In all these respects a great change has been wrought in later years within our own memories. Let it be ours now to be faithful to the truths GOD has revealed to us, but large-hearted and loving to all those who differ from us, so that we may show the truth of the principles which we hold, and grow more and more faithful to the Church of GOD, built up in one mystical temple, and at the same time more full of love and charity. That we may be true in our day of grace, that our works may follow us and our treasure be in Heaven, where our Master is, should be our earnest prayer, so that when the Day of the LORD comes, we may look with enraptured joy on the Face of JESUS CHRIST, as He draws together the members of His Body into union with Himself, having perfected His kingdom, and delivers it up to His FATHER, when GOD will Himself be All in all.

XI.

The Communion of Saints.

"Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them."—2 Kings vi. 16.

I HAVE selected this text, because it illustrates our subject to-day,—the next Article of the Creed, "The Communion of Saints."

Let me recall to your minds the circumstances under which the words of the text were uttered by Elisha. He was at the time accompanied by a young man, his attendant. They were shut up in a city around which the forces of the great Syrian army were gathered. The young man was afraid, and Elisha, to strengthen his faith, and to show him the powers that were around to protect them, as well as those that were against them, prayed that his eyes might be opened. And his eyes were opened, and he saw "horses and chariots of fire." We know that "horses of fire and chariots of fire," is a metaphor

used in Scripture to represent the Angelic hosts. The vision therefore was meant to assure the timid youth, that while the enemy was around them, the guardianship of the holy Angels was also close at hand. Now this description of the nearness, the companionship of the Angels, is in a very true sense an illustration of what I wish to set before you to-day in regard to the Communion of the Saints.

In speaking of the Holy Catholic Church, we speak of the whole visible Communion, composed of bad and good,—those who will at the last be gathered in to be blessed for ever in GOD, and those who will be cast out and lost. On the other hand, in speaking of the Saints, we speak of the invisible world,—of that unseen company of the true elect, who are known only to Him Who searcheth the heart. The Article passes from the external Communion which we call the Catholic Church, to that internal and invisible Communion known only to GOD, part of which is gathered in to be with Him in the intermediate state with the Blessed, and part are growing more and more faithful here on earth,—the faithful among the unfaithful.

Let me further point out to you, that the word Communion means an active fellowship, a closeness of union carried out in acts. Such is the common meaning of the term. Thus we speak of holding

communion one with another, with friends on earth, by which we mean some outward acts of fellowship. Thus again we speak of Holy Communion, which is an intensely active ministration, for it is the communication of CHRIST to His own elect, in a very real act of power. We speak also of the Communion of the HOLY GHOST, and there is nothing more energetic than the work of the HOLY SPIRIT, filling the elect of GOD with fruits of grace.

Therefore the term "Communion," as applied to our relation to the Saints in the spiritual world, means an active state, a real true communion and interchange. And this leads us on to consider the condition of the Saints, and how they are engaged in their hidden and secret manner of life. They do not lie as torpid beings in unconscious slumber; they are alive, not asleep, or in a state of suspended animation. They have passed away where the life they cherished on earth has grown and developed into yet fuller life and higher energy. And they are the same as they were as to their identity of being. They have carried with them into that hidden region their loves, their memories, their interests, their hopes, their experiences, the results of their joys and sorrows. Among their acts, we cannot doubt but that they are still aiding their brethren on earth by their prayers,

for they who prayed so earnestly for their brethren while on earth, cannot pray less earnestly for them now that they are in the higher world, nearer to GOD, and with closer access to the Throne of Grace.

Surely there can be no question as to this. We cannot suppose that the Apostles have ceased to care for the Churches which they founded on earth. We cannot suppose that holy men and women whose lives were filled with acts of love, have ceased to care for those for whom they toiled and suffered. We cannot suppose that when S. Stephen died, he ceased to intercede for those who suffer like persecution. We cannot suppose that parents and guardians of the young, who have watched night and day, year after year, over those committed to their keeping, with anxiety which none can know save He Who planted that love in their hearts, can possibly cease to care when they are drawn within the veil, or cease to pray, when, being in sight of JESUS, they must be fuller than ever of earnest desire for those they so cared for on earth?

Or, to view the other side of the question, how those still living on earth should regard the departed,—is it possible that having loved and prayed for those we love in this world, up to the moment of their death, and even still prayed for them at the grave, where

we utter the petition that "with all them that are departed in the true faith of Thy holy Name we may have our perfect consummation and bliss,"—is it possible, I say, that when prayer has been the very breath of life, we should cease to pray for those who depart, specially if there is a need, as indeed there is, even in the case of the faithful, that they may be purged from the remains of old faults, and fully prepared to be admitted into the presence of the most Holy GOD? It is impossible that having been engaged in prayer for them up to that crisis, we should then suddenly cease to pray for them any more.

Therefore when we speak of the Communion of Saints, we speak of a very active intercourse and energetic fellowship on both sides. They remember us, and we remember them. They pray for us, and we pray for them. They long for our joining them, and we too long to be with them in the LORD. It may be said, Is not this to interfere with the work of the One Mediator between GOD and man? or to suppose that the Intercession of JESUS is not sufficient? But surely we do not make this objection with regard to prayer for one another on earth. When we are anxious about those we love, our first thought is to have as many prayers for them as possible, and especially the prayers of the more righteous.

And where is the difference if we desire the prayers of those who are nearest to GOD, whether they are on earth or in heaven ; or rather, would not their prayers be the more earnest and the more effectual, the nearer they are to GOD? What the Scripture tells us is, *not* that no prayer avails but that of the One Great Intercessor,—but that no prayer is heard save *through* the One Great Intercessor. It tells us that the whole creation joins in the incense of ceaseless intercession, and that the Great Intercessor standing at the Altar before the Throne with His "censer," full of "the prayers of Saints,"[1] pleads them accompanied with His own all-availing prayers, Himself at once the channel of others' prayers, and their meritorious efficacy.

Again, it has been questioned whether the Saints above know our wants on earth ; whether they can see or hear what is going on here, and what their brethren have to bear in this world. Can souls in this world communicate with souls in the other world, and spirits *here* with the spirits *there?* Have the departed any power of communication, so that what fills the Church here, thrills also through the company of departed Saints, so that the struggle of a soul here may meet with some response, some throbbing sense

[1] Rev. viii. 3.

of sympathy beyond the skies? Of this indeed we have no certainty. GOD has left what we cannot but anxiously desire to know of another world, to be seen only "as in a glass, darkly." But the vision of the Angels shown to the young man in the text proves that the unseen world and those invisible hosts of Angels, were nearer than he thought,—as near as the army that besieged the city,—as intently watching, and more able to help than the enemy surrounding him. And there are intimations in the Word of GOD that lead the mind on as it muses on invisible things. You will remember in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that S. Paul enumerates the sainted Fathers of the race of Israel, and after that wonderful catalogue of these glorious ones, he says, "Seeing we are compassed about with *so great a cloud of witnesses*," &c., &c.[1] He speaks, that is, to the Jewish converts as if they were living and acting in the sight of the long line of their ancestry, the Patriarchs, and Saints, and warriors of Israel, and tells them they ought to be strengthened and encouraged by the consciousness that they were seen and known, that they should seek to be more faithful, and bear their burden, and make efforts, in hopes of one day entering into the like glory.

[1] Heb. xi., xii. 1.

Again, the Apostle says of himself and his brother Apostles, "We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to Angels, and to men."[1] Those early leaders of the Christian hosts, who had to pass through such trials and persecutions, were inwardly supported and cheered by the thought that they were not unnoticed, or uncared for, but had around them "horses of fire and chariots of fire," a great host looking on anxiously, and breathing fervent prayers, that they might be victorious in the day of their agony.

We may therefore surely be strengthened by the thought, that though in ways not clear to us, ignorant as we are as to the state and conditions of the departed in the unseen world, we surely act and suffer and toil as in a vast theatre, seen and gazed upon by invisible hosts, and that among those intelligences, the departed Saints of GOD have their place, and are, as far as they may be, our fellow-helpers in the strife, rejoicing in our victories, in some sense participating in our trials, and unceasingly entreating the Heart of GOD, that we may have grace to continue steadfast.

They watch for us the more earnestly, for they "without us cannot be made perfect."[2] The hastening of the time when they shall behold the Beatific

[1] 1 Cor. iv. 9. [2] Heb. xi. 40.

Vision depends on us. And we on our side may well be thankful, if they will bear us in their hearts before GOD, that we may be as faithful as they were in their day of trial, and may one day be gathered in, if it be only at the feet of the Saints of GOD, yet in the same blessed company, within the Heavenly mansions, where CHRIST will assemble His flock in the day of His glory, and make us to rejoice for ever, being made perfect with joy unspeakable in the Home of the Everlasting FATHER.

There are degrees of glory among the Saints of GOD, some nearer His Throne, some, as it has been believed, taken up to His immediate Presence, as those who rose with CHRIST on the day of His Resurrection, before the time, as, e.g., the Apostles and Martyrs to whom such wonderful grace was given, distinguishing them above their brethren; but all are one in the love and power of their LORD, even with the faithful on earth in whom alike He dwells.

May it be ours, claiming their fellowship, and feeling the support of their sympathies and their intercessions, to follow on that we too may "know the LORD," and be found of Him in the same eternal peace and endless joy.

XII.

The Forgiveness of Sins.

"Him hath God exalted with His Right Hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."—Acts v. 31.

THIS great doctrine of the forgiveness of sins through JESUS CHRIST, was among the first which the Apostles declared after His Resurrection. And it produced an enormous effect. Those who opposed the truth were cut to the heart when they heard it. They would have stoned the Apostles in their fury. Still "multitudes, both of men and women," believed.

This same doctrine of Forgiveness of sins, stands in the Creed next after the belief in the Communion of Saints, teaching us that it is the first blessing given in the Church of GOD, and the foundation on which all other hopes for man are laid.

There are three points on which I would dwell.

First, the need for this great truth; secondly, what it implies; and thirdly, what is the condition on which it is assured to us.

First, as to the need there is in the soul of man for forgiveness. When any man is conscious of sin, there arises a deep sense of remorse, with a craving for relief and restoration to the peace which has been lost. This is a very instinct of nature, and is lost only if a man becomes hardened against the truth. The question is, Where is this relief to be found? How is this craving to be satisfied? Man has nothing to offer of his own to make atonement to his GOD, nor can he relieve his soul by sacrifice, for he has nothing of his own to offer. All that he has is already GOD'S. If a man turns away from the sin that he has committed, does the cessation of wrongdoing satisfy the soul? The sin remains, and the consequences of the sin remain. The turning from the sin does not change the fact, which remains before GOD and in the man's own soul, and would remain, if not done away by some power greater than his own, to all eternity. Or does mere sorrow satisfy that craving, and relieve the sense of guilt? Let experience teach.—The more the conscience-stricken man is moved to sorrow, the more he longs for relief and craves to be healed. The Jewish religion provided only a ceremonial cleans-

ing; it was the promise and the type of something deeper, but it was no more. "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins."[1] There still remained then that deep craving in the soul, the impossibility of procuring relief, up to the time when our LORD offered His Sacrifice; for neither in any known form of religion was relief to be found, nor could another man satisfy the sufferer's needs.

It was very touching to hear, at the recent Church Congress,[2] a converted Mohammedan describe, how he had been led to seek in CHRIST, what he could not find in the Koran, or in the teaching of the most learned among the Mohammedans. He had for his teacher, he said, a man of great learning, who had felt this deep craving and desire for relief, of which I have spoken, and moved to seek it, he had retired into a solitude. He there afflicted himself with many austerities, striving by mortification to find the relief he needed. But still in vain. There was nothing in his religion that *could* satisfy his need. In the Koran, he said, no sense of sin is spoken of, nor even the fact of sin, neither is anything said of the Fatherly relation of GOD, or of the love of GOD, towards His

[1] Heb. x. 4.

[2] The allusion is to the Croydon Congress.

creatures, nor anything of an atonement as a ground of forgiveness. It was from this craving which could not be satisfied in the religion of the false prophet, that he turned to the Christian religion. This simple experience became the ground of conversion of one, who is now an ordained Deacon in the Church of CHRIST.

It is a marked instance of an universal truth; for the craving exists in every man, and nowhere but in the Church of CHRIST, is there provision made to meet it.

Secondly, what does forgiveness mean? In order to understand this, it is necessary to bear in mind that there are two evils that sin works. First, there is the guilt brought upon the soul, which involves the loss of peace and of the favour of GOD. Secondly, there is loss of grace and power to turn to serve GOD.

Both these evil consequences of sin have to be met in order that forgiveness may be obtained. The evil is twofold; the remedy must be twofold. There must be that which is sufficient to reconcile the man to GOD, and also that which revives in the soul the power of grace to live to GOD. And there *is* a remedy for both needs in the Gospel of CHRIST, and in that alone. First, the Precious Blood of CHRIST, and His accepted Sacrifice, constitute an Atonement

which restores the soul to the FATHER'S love. The Countenance which had been hidden shines out again, and the soul which has been troubled, finds peace in the assurance of a true and sufficient satisfaction for sin. But this is not all. The wounded man must also be restored to life. Not only must the disease be cured, but the vigour of health must be renewed. This second grace is the HOLY SPIRIT'S renewing and reviving power, working within the soul, restoring the lost graces and empowering the soul again to lead the life of GOD. And the Spirit's work in the soul is the further fruit of the Redeemer's sacrifice.

It is the coalescing of these two facts, which make up what we mean by "the Forgiveness of sins." One part takes place in Heaven, the other part takes place in the man's own soul. The Precious Blood, offered in Heaven, wins for us the grace; the HOLY SPIRIT, working in the soul, applies its virtue to us.

Thirdly, we have to consider the conditions on which this great work, this infinite blessing, can be received. Here let me point out two false doctrines which very commonly prevail on this subject, and hinder the full work of peace. One is, that forgiveness consists in an act of faith, in a man merely believing in his acceptance. The great evil of this idea is, that it separates *forgiveness* and *holiness*, and causes

it to be supposed, that a man can be saved without being restored to a better state of life. This strikes at the very root of the Holiness of GOD; as if the Holy GOD could receive back to Himself a sinner continuing in his sin, merely by an act of faith. The second false idea is, that it is enough security to *feel* that we are forgiven, to feel that one is received back as a child of GOD, as if feelings were not the most deceitful part of man's nature; as if we were not warned by our LORD Himself, that even the elect may be deceived.

Both these errors are condemned in the text. And it is most important to observe how in the very beginnings of Christianity, when the great truth of forgiveness was first announced, repentance is coupled with forgiveness; "to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

The working of repentance, which is the gift of GOD, comes first, the forgiveness of sins only follows the working of repentance. Most important is it to bear in mind how this great blessing rests on a reality which must precede and correspond with it. There must first be a fitness in the heart of man, there must be a preparation of heart, to respond to the promised gift of love. We cannot separate the two. We cannot lose the hope of forgiveness, without sinking into

uttermost despair, and again if we fail to repent, we lose the hope of drawing near to GOD; for it is a certain truth, that, "without holiness, no man can see the LORD."

Repentance, it must be noted, is not merely a "godly sorrow" softening the heart, and leading it to hate sin; it also implies a moral change, a longing and an effort to deny oneself, and to turn with thankfulness to all means of obtaining grace to live better. No man who thus truly and thoroughly repents, in faith in JESUS, can fail to find the perfect gift of GOD'S free forgiveness. But while it is open to all who truly return to GOD in acts of loving penitence, to claim the great promise, I would add, that there is a further comfort provided in the Church's ordinances, to assure the doubting trembling soul of the truth, —that those who cannot quiet their own consciences and are troubled, may obtain the certainty they need by confession to GOD in the presence of His ministers. Such confession, if truly made, is followed by absolution, which is by GOD'S appointment the seal and pledge of the forgiveness of sins. It is a superadded grace within the Church to remove the trembling sinner's doubts. There is then both the outward sign and the inward grace, meeting together. The inward grace is the work of GOD alone; the outward sign is

given according to His appointment, and His grace is thus assured according to our need.

Let me lead you finally to dwell on the wonderful scene presented to our minds when we apprehend the forgiveness of sin, as a living lifegiving truth ;—the open Heaven, the LORD JESUS exalted on the Eternal Throne, in His Kingdom, as a Prince and SAVIOUR, He Who is at once the SON of GOD and the Son of Man, once suffering in contumely and agony on earth, now in the royal beneficence of His power presenting before His FATHER the merits of His Sacrifice—the Blood that He shed and His Body wounded to death, His offered Life, and the results flowing from It ceaselessly, giving life to the multitude who seek to find Him, and through Him have access to the FATHER, and who know, that when their hearts are clouded by the burden of sin, they may as by the touching of a spring drink in to their souls the virtue of His Sacrifice, and the power of His Spirit, purchased for us by His meritorious Sacrifice.

The King above, in His saving power, the Church below, in its ordered ministrations of grace, meet together in nourishing the soul of the redeemed,—from heaven the saving grace ever going forth, from below thankful hearts rising to praise and bless their Redeemer.

It has been shown how absolution is the special ordinance for the forgiveness of post-baptismal sin. But it must never be forgotten, that holy Baptism conveys plenary forgiveness and grace of renewed life, as the first gift of GOD to those who are brought to Him in faith in JESUS. And again we taste this blessedness, when we kneel before the Altar, in the great Sacrament in which His Sacrifice is continually offered, His merits pleaded and applied ceaselessly, and the assembled congregation ever renewing their praise and thanksgiving. For in the Holy Eucharist heaven and earth meet, the faithful on earth who are being fed and purified for GOD, uniting with the Angels and Archangels, who in their hymns of joy worship together with us "the Lamb as it had been slain."

May it be ours then to live in the conscious joy of this great gift, ever pleading the merits of the atonement through which we obtain it, and adoring Him Who purchased it for us at so great a cost. May it be ours also to show forth the fruits of our faith by steadfastness of patience during our seasons of trial, and by constant onward progress in the path of obedience, and the devotion of grateful love, showing forth the fruits of His pardoning grace, that we may at last enter in peace into His perfected Kingdom.

XIII.

The Resurrection of the Body.

"When the people were put forth, He went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose."—S. Matt. ix. 25.

THIS is one of the great acts of power in raising the dead, recorded of our Blessed LORD. It was to be an object presented only to the eye of faith, and therefore the unbelievers were put forth before He could work the miracle. They had laughed Him to scorn when He said, "The maiden is not dead, but sleepeth," but as soon as they had left, "He took her by the hand, and the maid arose." There are two other miracles of the same kind, following in a regular succession, manifesting what seems to us, though not in reality as regards GOD, a greater power. There was the raising of the son of the widow of Nain, in which case more time had passed after death, for he was being carried out to his burial; and again the raising

of Lazarus, when actually in the grave, and his body already in a state of decay.

Further on we find a fourth great fact connected with our LORD'S raising the dead, when, on the day of His own Resurrection, "many bodies of the saints which slept arose," after the lapse of ages, "and went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many."[1] It is only necessary to carry on our meditations further still to see the general rising of the dead, when all alike shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and come forth, some to everlasting happiness, some to separation from GOD and endless loss.

We are thus led to consider the next article in the Creed, "*I believe in the Resurrection of the body.*" The three instances I have mentioned are instances of the fact, in which we continually express our belief. The term *resurrection* implies especially the *rising of the body;* the rising of that which has become mere corruption, and been buried in the earth. This was the great truth that our LORD announced, for that the *soul* lived for ever was known before, and is part of the common belief of the nations of the earth, derived we cannot doubt by tradition from the first creation of man.

But the resurrection of the body was previously

[1] S. Matt. xxvii. 52.

unknown, or but very dimly surmised, before the coming of our LORD. It was the great wonder which He brought to light, and in His own Person visibly exhibited. In another version of the Creed, that used in the Baptismal Service, the wording is changed. It there stands, "the resurrection of the *flesh*." The same truth is thus expressed only in a stronger manner, for it is there shown that not merely the bodily form, but the very lowest elements, the material essence of the body, will in some mysterious transformation live again. And it was this that startled the world. It seemed to the heathen utterly incredible, that these same bodies of humiliation, so marred, subject to such accidents, to such decay, should form outwardly the tabernacle of the spirit in a higher and more blessed world. And yet there is a very instinct that clings to the body, so that the idea of dissolution, of the separation of soul and body, is a shock to the mind of man, and involves a wrench, a struggle from which all shrink. Our natural consciousness seems to say that our body, equally as our soul, is part of our very selves.

It formed an awful crisis, even in our LORD'S life, when on the Cross, with a "loud" great cry, He gave forth His Soul, rending it from His Body.[1]

[1] S. Matt. xxvii. 50.

Nor can we separate the soul from the body in mental apprehension. When the soul has passed from the body, we regard the body still as the living person, and still cherish it fondly. We deck it with honour, we pay to the loved form all reverence, feeling that it is the living person still. We tend it carefully; we lay it in sacred ground with all possible devotion, and love the spot where the remains of our dead lie. We cannot separate the idea of the relics of that form from the full life of the spirit and soul which was within it. Nor can we imagine perfection of the restored humanity being attained, except by the reunion of soul and body. Nor can we conceive the perfection of the Incarnation of the SON of GOD, except by the union of His sacred Soul and His sacred Body, indissolubly united together for evermore.

Again, our idea of perfect enjoyment depends on the union of the two component parts of our nature the joyousness that resides in the bodily frame intensifying the rapturous delight of the spirit. How, for instance, does it add to the soul's gladness to look with the eye of the body on some scene of beauty, which before we imagined only in the mind? Or is not music one of the purest intellectual pleasures, and it is through the ear that the soul is wrapped in delight, and the enchanting sounds

vibrate? So with the affections, which exist unitedly in the body and the soul. We have not their full enjoyment till we grasp the hand and gaze on the face of the one we love. It is through the body that the soul communicates its delight, and rests in full communion with the person beloved.

It is therefore agreeable to our experience, it follows irresistibly from our natural impulses, to believe that, inasmuch as perfect beatitude and completeness of joy is the promised reward of the faithful, and to see GOD Himself in some mysterious way our perfect bliss, so it is necessary that the soul should be able to commune with the Unseen through its bodily organs, and our consummated joy be compounded of the bodily sense and the mental perception.

And the reverse is equally true. In the body as well as in the soul, the awful consequences of separation from the living GOD will be felt in all their fulness. But of this, fraught as it is with thoughts of terror, I would not speak now.

There are two great points to be kept in view with regard to the body, its identity, and its distinctiveness. There seems sufficient evidence, that it is the same body that will live before GOD, the same in which we live now. There will be a recognition. Those who know one another on earth, will know one another again.

There will be a likeness by which each will be discerned. It was thus in the Transfiguration. When Moses and Elias appeared, they were known. They were in risen bodies, and yet with a likeness that could be discerned. The recognition of the dead hereafter is one part of the mystery as it was then exhibited to us. The joy of the Saints will be all the more joyous from the re-uniting of broken ties after the temporary separation. The fulness of blessedness will be filled up to the full by the consciousness of the blessedness of those, with whose interests our own life has been wrapped up, and without whom it would not be felt to be complete.

However difficult it may be for us to realise, how such a restoration of mutual recognition and delight in each other's intercourse may be fulfilled in another world, yet that there will be such a restoration is implied in what took place between CHRIST Himself and His disciples, after His Resurrection. For we are to rise as He rose, in the likeness of His Body, and one with Himself.

However confused at first the disciples were at the first sight of the risen LORD, as in the case of S. Mary Magdalene, yet when their eyes in their present mortal state had rested for awhile upon His Glorious Body, they saw the same Features, their hands

touched the same sacred Hands and Feet, their joy rested in the assurance of the same Presence. They walked with Him as before, though He moved in the world of spirits, and they still lingered in their present earthly state.

The identity of personality in the risen state is therefore one material fact of the Resurrection. And yet how different shall we then be! But the like difference with a like identity occurs in the natural world. The selfsame seed grows into various forms of beauty. The flower is the same being, has the same life, with the seed sown. The butterfly is identical with the caterpillar, out of which it rises in the summer skies. These are natural parables which exhibit and illustrate our future transformation out of our present bodies of humiliation.

As from our LORD'S Resurrection we learn the truth and the nature of the resurrection of our own bodies, so from the same source we learn the truth of the sanctity of the body. For the first time, as a consequence of our LORD'S life in the body, was revealed to the Christian mind the necessity of care for preserving in a pure state that which enshrines the soul, and in part unites man with GOD through the Incarnation of His SON.

The care for the body is marked in the New Testa-

ment with the greatest force, and in a manner in which it was not revealed before. To discipline the body is one of its chief lessons. To preserve it from impurity and intemperance is one of its strictest injunctions. From this arises the sanctity of marriage, the sacramental grace and care of chastity proper to that state, and generally in all states of life the necessity of extreme care for the sanctification, not merely of the soul and mind, but of the body also. This need arises from the fact that the body is so intimately united with the spirit, has equally an eternal life, and is alike capable of corruption and abuse, or of purity and holiness.

"There is nothing," says an old Father, "we can do without the body. With the mouth we can blaspheme and praise, with the hands we can steal and give alms, with the body commit impurity and guard our chastity." There is the possibility of utter loss, in the one case, or of endless gain in preserving our union with our LORD, in the other.

Our LORD has more especially connected purity of body with the Holy Communion, for by receiving the Communion of His Body and His Blood, we partake of the power and grace which fits the body for its glorious transformation. It becomes capable of resurrection through partaking of His risen Body. In

the sixth chapter of S. John our LORD says, "Whoso eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."[1]

There is, then, a most intimate connection between the two, and as our present body is enabled to preserve itself pure through its connection with our LORD'S risen Body, so likewise its hope of resurrection depends on this same union, grace and power in either case being wrought through His Presence within us.

For this reason it has been the use of the Church in all ages, however frequent the reception of Holy Communion before, to receive the "Viaticum," or last Communion, in the passage from this world to the next, as a security for that last hour, the sure promise to the Faithful of attaining to the fulness of its perfected beauty in the likeness of its LORD, being thus sacramentally assured.

We may moreover connect with the Resurrection of our LORD the hoped for restoration of the entire creation. For the whole world looks forward to a future state, as the Scripture says, "The *whole creation* groaneth and travaileth in pain together," and then adds, the "hope," that "the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of GOD."[2] As the

[1] S. John vi. 54. [2] Rom. viii. 21, 22.

whole world of creation around us suffers from the effects of the Fall, so, in some mystery, they will know a resurrection, and be transformed into a pure, more blessed, more beautiful state. All around will share in some measure in the consequences of the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST. *We* are "the first fruits," and shall become the "Image of His Person," but certainly Holy Scripture seems to show that the living things around us, even the lowest creatures, are not to be destroyed, but after their manner, according to their kind, to be restored, giving praise and glory to Him Who created them.

Let us dwell in thought, then, on that final transformation, as the hope that is to encourage us to become holy, both in soul and body. For we are "saved by hope." "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first Resurrection;" for "on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of GOD and of CHRIST, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."[1] Those who here live in union with their LORD, keeping themselves pure, are living in their first resurrection. They have the promise of the blessedness of the final Reward, and will partake with CHRIST of all that He has won for them.

May it be ours to know and rejoice for evermore

[1] Rev. xx. 6.

in that Great Day with Him, Who has gone into that higher world to prepare a place for His own. May we in our day of trial and grace be watchful over the least impulse of the body, as over each movement of the mind and heart, for the body is the sacred vessel, the tabernacle and instrument of the soul. Thus following our LORD here on earth, we shall share His Resurrection, and thus escape the utter horror of the "darkness and gnashing of teeth."

May we continue to advance more and more in communion with our LORD, and as more and more of the Resurrection Life grows in us, so may we know the blessedness of the hope which reaches forth to perfection in the heavenly state, to be raised up by Him at the Last Day, to be with Him for ever.

Whatever may be our condition in our intermediate state, our spiritual bodies will be the clothing of glory at the last, even after the fashion of CHRIST'S "glorious Body," and the final embrace of love in our everlasting home will be more than the compensation of the many trials, and the sore partings, which have been the discipline of our earthly course. The joy which knows no clouding will be the endless recompense of the steadfast faith, which has been even here "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen."[1]

[1] Heb. xi. 1.

XIV.

The Life Everlasting.

"*The Gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*"—Rom. vi. 23.

I PURPOSE to-day to set before you the last article of the Apostles' Creed, which is expressed in the words, *the Life Everlasting;* and while presenting this great thought to your minds, it is impossible not to view it also on its opposite side: the two are so intimately connected in the word of GOD. The future destiny of man has a dark as well as a bright side. What our LORD spoke of as "the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched;"[1] what S. Paul meant when he spoke of "everlasting destruction from the presence of the LORD,"[2] that the Church has ever held to be the condition of such souls as would be lost for ever. Let me first dwell briefly on this sad view of the future.

[1] S. Mark ix. 44. [2] 2 Thess. i. 9.

We are to bear in mind that every man will be judged by the law under which he lives. We express no opinion about those who never knew the Name of CHRIST, the vast multitude who have never known the True Light. They will be judged according to the law of nature. Even in Christian lands, there may be some so shut out from the knowledge of redemption in CHRIST, that they will be judged, like the heathen, by the natural law.

When the Church proclaims the solemn truth of the possible loss of the souls of men, it has in view those who might have been saved in the day of grace, who had the knowledge and the means of salvation opened to them, but of their own persistent will rejected it. It is the same belief which is intended to be expressed in the Creed of S. Athanasius; "they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire."

What may be the actual reality of that which is described under that awful term, "*fire*," what it may image or represent in a state of being which is altogether beyond the possible range of our understanding, must be left in uncertainty; but the belief of the Church has ever been, that there is a Hell, and that Hell is eternal. There are some, not a few in-

deed in our own days, who disbelieve this solemn truth, though the Church has held it from the beginning, according to words of Holy Scripture too plain, we may well think, to be thus easily put aside.

But it would be well for those who doubt, to consider how it is that our LORD, Whose very nature was tenderness and love of the most compassionate kind, could have spoken of such terrors, except as a warning to His beloved disciples, that they might save themselves from whatever is meant by these terms, and think, before it be too late, what must be the consequence, if the Precious Blood of JESUS, and the pleadings of His HOLY SPIRIT, and all the varied means that He has committed to His Church to bring home the truth to the souls of men, should fail to move them? What indeed can there be behind to give greater hope, what more than the scene of agony on Calvary, to touch human hearts, when we are assured that "there is no more sacrifice for sin,"[1] and our LORD Himself declares, that there are some sins which "shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the world to come?"[2] Surely if there be but the slightest ground for faith to rest upon, as to this awful prospect, it would be enough to scare the soul, and make it tremble on the verge of eternity,

[1] Heb. x. 26.

[2] S. Matt. xii. 32.

lest that one soul, if no other, should sink into the fatal abyss.

But let us return to what the Creed especially dwells upon, the brighter side of man's future. There are some who have little care for their future destiny, however bright; some who cling to this life so much as to be unwilling to change it for another, who feel it impossible, under a condition of things so different from what they have experienced, to imagine any sufficient grounds of joy to compensate for what would be lost or parted with in this world.

But surely it cannot be well with us, we cannot be living according to the mind of Him Who made us, unless, however many and great our blessings here, however bright our home, and happy our surroundings, we at the same time feel that if "to live is CHRIST," so "to die" in CHRIST must be "gain."[1] Surely, if GOD has furnished this lower world, notwithstanding its many causes of sorrow, and anxiety and trial, from which no man is safe even in the richest home, with such abundant means of enjoyment and delight, we may believe that in a world where sin has never entered, nor can enter, where temptation can never be known, where tears are wiped from all faces,—a home where GOD Himself

[1] Phil. i. 21.

abides,—He can furnish such a scene with a yet purer, higher, more ecstatic, infinite delight.

There are four things especially which are necessary for our entire rest and satisfaction; Knowledge, or the full satisfaction for our mental powers; Love, or full satisfaction for the warm affections of the heart; Beauty, or full satisfaction to the tastes in their highest refinements; Active Service, or full satisfaction to our various energies.

What do we gather from Scripture as to these different desires, and powers of our being?

First as to Knowledge; we read that what we now see "darkly," we shall then see "face to face;" that what "we know in part," we "shall then know even as also we are known."[1] What a world of interest, what an infinite range of all forms of intensest delight do such words disclose, opening all spheres of knowledge, whether in the things of GOD Himself, or in the things which He has made, all things made possible to a creature's intellect to embrace and delight in!

Again, as to Love; when we feel here how the longings of love are continually disappointed in the midst of the distractions of life, so that there is after all an aching void, do we not feel the need of some-

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

thing beyond, on which we may dwell with the anticipation of keenest desire? When we read that however great the graces of "Faith" and "Hope," yet the still greater grace is "Charity;"[1] that, when all else fails, when Faith is lost in sight, and Hope in fruition, "Charity never faileth;"[2] that it hath an eternal restfulness, unlike to other gifts, none in comparison reaching to its fulness, and "whoso dwelleth in love, dwelleth in GOD,"[3]—then surely there must be for loving, craving hearts some joy in the future beyond what we can possess here?

Thirdly, as to Beauty. Does not S. John, in the Revelations, heap together all objects of delight, all the most beautiful symbols this earth can furnish, of gem and jewel, of pearl and gold, and all exquisite things most beautiful to the senses, to symbolise that heavenly City, which "hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the Lamb is the Light thereof?"[4]

Fourthly, as to Activity. As far as it is possible in human language to speak of the active ministrations and interests of a world, where the spirit prevails over the body, and makes the body simply a creature of the will, the Book of the Revelations opens to us

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 13.
[2] 1 Cor. xiii. 8, 13.
[3] 1 S. John iv. 16.
[4] Rev. xxi. 23.

the future. "His servants shall serve Him."[1] Some ministry therefore, some form of active life in the very midst of the light of the living GOD, there must be. And so again these remarkable words, "They follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth,"[2] clearly tell of a ceaseless blessed activity and wondering interest in common with the eternal heavenly life of JESUS, as their LORD and King. Saints redeemed from the earth become the ministrants of GOD in higher spheres. The denizens of that higher life will find spheres of love, and zeal, and delight in Him in Whom they live, and move and are blessed for ever and ever.

Thus far as to what is revealed, but beyond all these things, the hope held out to the redeemed man, soars to a yet more wonderful range of thought. What is known as the Beatific Vision, the sight which Moses yearned to see,[3] before the time, when he was taken up into the mount alone, to converse with GOD, but of which he could but see the "back parts," as the Goodness of the Living GOD passed before him, but not GOD Himself, of Whom the Goodness is,—this is our promised bliss. That very sight, that very essence, that wonderful Nature, the infinite well of life that ever springs within the Eternal, will be re-

[1] Rev. xxii. 3. [2] Rev. xiv. 4. [3] Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19.

vealed to us as our fulness of joy. The ineffable Vision reserved for His Elect is the very sight of GOD Himself, for, as S. John says, "we shall see Him as He is;"[1] not indeed with natural faculties, not with the bodily sense, though through it, in its transfigured glorified state, with the entranced eye of a higher power with which we shall be then endued, in His own "Light we shall see Light,"—the light of a greater glory than Adam knew when he saw GOD walking in the garden. Such a Vision, not indeed nakedly the very Essence of the Godhead, but GOD in CHRIST, and through CHRIST the GOD-Man, with the investiture of a higher life surrounding Himself and us, we shall then see. The ransomed soul in its glorified condition shall see, through a haze as it were, through a radiance which is not its own, but a gift, a radiance derived from the Infinite Source of Light. The Eternal and Ever-blessed Godhead will be revealed to His Elect.

A wonderful future therefore is placed before us, a wonderful reign of mental life, and vigour, and fulness of joy, delights of an endless ceaseless love, beauty beyond our thought, intense powers of action, and beyond all, the infinite joy in GOD thrilling through all the Blessed, as all are gathered together

[1] 1 S. John iii. 2.

within the circle of light, through Him Who has redeemed and sanctified us, transformed and glorified us, and made us one with Himself, as He is One with the Everlasting FATHER.

Let us then, in bringing such thoughts like lines of light to one Centre, turn more and more heavenward, and seek that nothing may be wanting on our part to respond to the call of GOD, that He may make us meet for that which He has Himself prepared, whither He Himself is gone before,—that we may grow in heavenly-mindedness, in meetness for that eternal state of ecstasy of bliss which is set before us, "looking unto JESUS" in the light into which He has entered. Even now He from above holds over us the crown of light, ready to be placed on the brow of His chosen ones, that they may shine like Himself, and live in the glory of the Eternal GOD, in Whose light they have lived on earth, and in the joy of Whose Countenance they seek to rest for ever.

How wonderful it is that what we become in time on this earth, will determine what we shall be in all eternity! How important then must be every hour of this our day of grace! How careful as to every thought, and word, and act, we should be, since such a weight of glory, or such fearful loss, hangs on the issue! Yet precious as the grace which we may

obtain here is to us, more precious, more dear still is the thought of the love which obtained it for us, which at such a tremendous cost, the entire sacrifice of Himself, won us back from evil and from death to glorify His FATHER through all eternity.

Instructions on the Sacraments.[1]

I.

Holy Baptism.

THERE are three chief texts from which we gather the great truths concerning this primary Sacrament. First, S. John iii. 3—8. In our LORD'S discourse with Nicodemus, He speaks thus: "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of GOD." The explanation follows. "Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? JESUS answered, Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of GOD. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

[1] As stated in the Preface, only certain of the Sacraments were selected for the course.

The first point to mark is, that our LORD likens the effect of Baptism to our natural birth of our parents, so that the one is explanatory of the other, and also, as we therefore presume, in its main features, coextensive with the other.

As by our natural birth, we have life, with its several powers suited to this present order of things, so by Baptism we have a higher life, suited to a spiritual and higher order of things. There is by this means infused (for that is the actual grace of Baptism) into our whole being, powers of a higher nature, giving dispositions, capacities, and energies, enabling the natural powers to live a higher life, and in connection with a higher order of things. For it is not any one particular virtue, or any fresh instinct or gift that we then receive, but new powers and new dispositions, so as to raise the whole natural life into a supernatural condition.

It is necessary to mark one particular expression in this text, as it is given in the original words, since the English Version does not bring it out in its full meaning. "Except a man be born *again*." The word "*again*" is not an adequate version of the original. It truly expresses the idea of a second birth, but does not say how that birth is derived, or whence it proceeds. The original word more properly means "from

above," and both in this third and in the seventh verse where the same word occurs again, the same idea is conveyed. The word seems to connect itself with the expression of Nicodemus, "We know that Thou art a teacher come *from God*." Nicodemus derived from the miracles of JESUS the knowledge that He Himself had His origin in the only source whence miracles could proceed, and our LORD seems to take up this expression of faith, and speaks of the New Birth, as being also a life that comes from GOD, as His own life had come from GOD. The words follow on each other closely. "Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from GOD." JESUS answers, Yes, and you must also be born from above, and then a higher order of life will grow up in you as the natural consequence of this higher birth and higher condition of existence. Our LORD then concludes with a repetition of the same truth; "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again,"[1] i.e., *from above*. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Our LORD likens the birth from above to the wind, as a fit earthly symbol of spiritual energy. Like the wind, this higher birth comes from an in-

[1] S. John iii. 7.

visible source, and goes forth to an invisible destiny as its proper end, of which as yet we know not. You may compare other passages where this same term, "again," or "from above," is employed, with this same meaning. Thus, in S. John viii. 23, our LORD says of Himself, "I am from above." My life is derived from the higher order of existence, from Him Who is above all. And again, in S. John xix. 11, "JESUS answered, Thou couldest have no power against Me, except it were given thee from above," from the Source of Almighty Power.

One important distinction must be noted between the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. Of Baptism it is said, Ye must be "born of water and the Spirit." The one accompanies the other, but our LORD does not say of the water, "This is Spirit," as He says of the Bread and Wine, "This is My Body," "This is My Blood." There is not, therefore, a Presence of the HOLY SPIRIT in the water, as there is a Presence of the Body and Blood of our LORD in union with the Bread and Wine; only the one accompanies, as it is also the sign of, the other. The water is sanctified for a holy use, but it is not a shrine or dwelling-place of the inner Life-giving Spirit Himself. You may observe how our Catechism preserves this truth. It says of the Holy Eucharist, that there are in It, 1, "Bread and

Wine, which the LORD hath commanded to be received;" 2, "the Body and Blood of CHRIST, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the Faithful," &c.; 3, "The strengthening and refreshing of our souls," &c. Thus there are three parts to be considered in the Eucharist,—the outward form, the inner Presence, and the effects within the soul. But in speaking of Holy Baptism there is a marked difference. The Catechism only speaks of the "outward sign," which is "Water," and the effect of the Spirit's work in the soul, which is "a death unto sin, and a new life unto righteousness." This is "the inward grace," as "the water" is "the outward sign." But there is no intermediate Presence of the Spirit in union with the water, as there is of the Body and Blood of CHRIST with the consecrated Elements in the Eucharist.

I would lead you next to the consideration of S. Matthew xxviii. 19, where the institution of Holy Baptism is given. You will observe that though our LORD spoke of Baptism very clearly in the beginning of His Ministry, He did not then appoint it as an ordinance. And for this reason. He could not,—speaking according to the order of GOD'S appointment,—give the HOLY SPIRIT, until He had Himself risen from the dead, and entered into the higher

world through the merits of His Passion. He must purchase by His sufferings the great gift of the new order of life, like to His own, and to be derived through Him to be the inheritance of His Elect. And therefore our LORD reserved the institution of Baptism till after His Resurrection, and not even then at once to be administered, but as a promise to be fulfilled after His Ascension, when He would send down the HOLY GHOST from Heaven. The institution took place during the great Forty days, the actual ministration of Baptism commencing upon the first Whitsun Day.

There are chiefly two points to be observed in this 19th verse of the xxviiith chapter of S. Matthew. One depends on a word not clearly explained in our version, if we compare it with the original. In our version we read our LORD'S command thus; "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them," &c. It would seem from this that there must be a teaching before there could be a Baptism; and, therefore, that infants could not be baptized, nor the gifts of this new Life be a birth like to our natural birth. The natural birth is a pure gift. We are raised out of nothingness by a pure work of GOD. We are at once possessed of the powers of life. It is the essential meaning of creation, out of nothingness into life. Now if there

must be a teaching before Baptism, it would not be an exact parallel. But the difficulty arises from an imperfection in our version; for the original word means properly "*make disciples*" of all nations. The teaching is to follow. This is shown to be the intended course of proceeding by what we read in the next verse. The Scripture should run thus: "Go ye, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." So that the life is first to be given, and then the teaching can be understood. But how could the teaching of the new life precede the powers of the new life, for one of the powers of the new life is a capacity to receive Divine instruction in spiritual things? We are to make men disciples by Baptism, and then instruct them in the things of the heavenly life into which they have been brought. We may ask, how is this consistent with the preparation of an adult person for Baptism? Must he not be taught before he is baptized? Surely. There are preparations of heart before receiving Divine grace, and so likewise there must be preparations of the understanding before the full illumination of the Spirit. The HOLY SPIRIT prepares the way for His saving gifts. Thus in regard to sin, there may be repentance

in its early stage, and a true confession of sins past, but absolution cannot be given to an unbaptized person, because there is not yet capacity to receive the restorative power. There can be no renewal of the spiritual life, as the spiritual life has not as yet been given. We therefore teach the unbaptized what Baptism is, and see that there is no obstacle to their receiving the grace of GOD, which in Baptism is assured, but we do not give the full teaching of the Christian's Creed till after Baptism.

Thus then, in the institution of this Sacrament, the disciples were bidden to go forth, and embrace all nations within the circle of a Heavenly existence, incorporating them into the Body of CHRIST, so that they might receive and grow in the fulness of the life of CHRIST.

There is another point, important to dwell upon, in this same text, and that is the holy "Name,"—"baptizing them in the *Name* of the FATHER, and the SON, and the HOLY GHOST." You are familiar with this term "the Name." Thus for instance it is said; "There is none other Name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."[1] And again; "His Name, through faith in His Name, hath made this man strong."[2] It was a familiar

[1] Acts iv. 12.

[2] Acts iii. 16.

term with the Israelites, and expressed familiar ideas. The "Name" means a manifestation of what the Person, signified by the Name, is to others. Most probably the usage arose from the early times, in the beginning of language, when names meant things, and expressed the essential property and power of the things to which they were attached. Hence then it arises, that baptizing "in the Name" of the Holy Trinity means baptizing "in," or as it rather should be "into, the power and energy and life of the FATHER and the SON and the HOLY GHOST,"—thus changing the condition of the baptized person, enfolding and embracing him within the being and attributes of the eternal Godhead.

In the case of the miracle mentioned in Acts iii. 16, the man was made strong by bringing to bear on him the power of JESUS CHRIST; not merely calling the Name over him, but calling out the energy of GOD through JESUS CHRIST to enter into him.

S. Peter (I. iii. 21) compares the water in Baptism to the Flood. The comparison means that as the water was the instrument of life to Noah, bearing him up above the destructive waves below, by a "like figure Baptism doth also now save us," bearing us on in its cleansing power over the stormy waves of this world. Baptism, he says, "saves us, not the

putting away of the filth of the flesh," not a mere outward cleansing, but by an inward work, "the answer of a good conscience before GOD." It implies a new life in the baptized, which can be offered to GOD, and co-operate with Him, and thus give an "answer," a response, as it were, to Him, in reply to His inward operations of grace, uttered and rising up with the new powers of a life able to hold communion with GOD, through the workings of a pure conscience.

And further as to this inner work. We are to connect Baptism with the Risen Life of JESUS. It "saves us" by uniting us to His Risen Life, by the power that goes forth from the Risen SAVIOUR, from His Humanity in its perfected state, as It is glorified in heaven,—bestowed by JESUS in this His higher state, which He purchased for us by His Precious Blood, and into which for us He entered, when He ascended. What gives to Baptism its power is, that it plants within, and sets to work in us, the powers of the Risen Life of JESUS CHRIST, as He is now on the Right Hand of GOD.

This risen state of life therefore should be continually growing after His likeness, more and more true to that higher order of things, which exists where JESUS is at the Right Hand of GOD, beneath which all earthly powers will finally be subjected.

Another point to consider is, that Baptism makes us capable of all after gifts, and is essential for that purpose. It is the first life with the capacity for the full development in its appointed order, of all that is pure and holy. To give Confirmation, or Absolution, or Communion to an unbaptized person, would be useless. The higher order of the HOLY SPIRIT'S ministrations requires a suitable capacity of receiving such grace, as a special soil is required for plants to grow in.

Among these special capacities there is one that I would desire briefly to particularise. Baptism gives to all baptized persons, a priesthood; the priesthood which belongs to the general body of believers, by which alone they are capable of making any offering to GOD, whether by simple prayer, or by joining in the Eucharistic sacrifice. It is not meant that Divine Mercy may not accept whatever any creature may strive to offer according to its powers, but baptized persons alone have the covenanted promise of acceptance,—the Priesthood of the Faithful acting together with the ministerial Priesthood. One proof of this may be given. It was the custom of the early Church never to teach the LORD'S Prayer except to the baptized, because by them alone the children's prayer could rightly be said,

even as by them alone the "children's bread" could be eaten.

Thus far then as to this primary and initiatory Sacramental grace. Let me, in conclusion, urge you to consider how far you have used the power you possess, how far you have sought to bring out all its blessed energy according to the will of Him Who created us afresh, and gave us this Divine Birth, in full union with His own glorious Incarnation. We are made responsible for the use of so great a gift. We are not compelled, or constrained by force, but we are drawn, inclined, influenced. The pleadings of the HOLY SPIRIT have been with us. The grace enabling us to follow, as He guides, cannot fail us. It rests then with us to use the appointed means of cherishing such a gift, and to keep ourselves pure and true, growing more and more steadfast in the faith and fear of GOD, in "patient continuance in well doing." May it be that when GOD calls us to give an account of our day of grace, we may be found faithful to His call, and prepared to meet Him when He arises to Judgment.

II.

Confirmation.

LET us to-day enter upon the subject of Confirmation, which properly follows upon Baptism. It is a Sacrament, though not so great a Sacrament as Baptism, and this for two reasons.

First, Baptism is universally necessary to salvation, that is to say, there is no promise of salvation to any man without it. This is the meaning of that word "generally," which you remember in the Catechism, where Baptism is said to be one of the Sacraments "*generally* necessary to salvation." "General," means universal, that is to say, for all persons. Baptism is also the greater Sacrament, because, as already shown, it is the means of infusing into us a living union with CHRIST, and so is accompanied with a capacity for all grace. Incorporation with CHRIST is the blessed effect of this Sacrament, as well as of the Holy Eucharist, and of these two alone.

We call the others *lesser* Sacraments. They are true Sacraments in this respect, that they are "outward visible Signs of inward grace," but they are not generally necessary, not, that is, for all; nor are they the means of perfect union with CHRIST, in respect of which two great prerogatives the other two rise above the rest.

It should be borne in mind that Confirmation has always been considered to be the complement of Baptism; that is to say, it completes the grace of Baptism, and therefore is necessary, as being in a certain sense a part of Baptism. On this account, as you will remember, in the case of Adult Baptism, of which we read in the Acts of the Apostles,[1] Confirmation was administered immediately afterwards. As soon as the Apostles heard that Philip had baptized the first converts of Samaria, they sent Peter and John to lay their hands on those who had been baptized. Confirmation was to them the completeness of their Baptism. But when Infant Baptism became the law of the Church, because of its necessity for salvation, then Confirmation was delayed, in order that the baptized might receive instruction, and be able to discern and understand their responsibilities, and the nature of the life to which they

[1] Acts viii. 14—17.

were pledged, before they received the full gifts of the HOLY GHOST by "the laying on of hands."

When it is said that the baptized persons "received the HOLY GHOST," it does not mean that they received Him then for the first time, for the HOLY SPIRIT is also given in Baptism. The meaning is that an enlarged gift, the fuller outpouring of the HOLY SPIRIT, is given in Confirmation. He is then for the first time given in His seven-fold power.

We have moreover to distinguish between ordinary and extraordinary gifts. There are some who teach that the same gift is not given now in Confirmation, as was given in those first days,—that when the Apostles' hands were laid on the baptized, there was a greater outpouring than is possible now in the ministry of our Bishops. There is indeed a difference, but not as to the spiritual benefits of this ministry. In the times of the Apostles, while miracles accompanied the first actions of the Church, Confirmation was accompanied by extraordinary gifts. Even a visible light shone on those who received the HOLY GHOST, as appears by the history of Simon Magus, who was so struck by the outward glory which surrounded the newly Confirmed, that he desired to purchase the same by money. He was not thinking of the inward spiritual gifts, but of the miraculous manifesta-

tion and powers which then accompanied them. These gifts passed away after the first ages. They were meant to give force and persuasiveness to the first teaching of the Gospel. But when the Church had grown in power, and the faith generally was received, and our LORD JESUS CHRIST acknowledged as the Redeemer and LORD of the new creation by the world at large, then the necessity for such outward testimony ceased, and the ordinary gifts only remained. The extraordinary gifts ceased, but the ordinary gifts of sanctity and grace, and the power of the HOLY SPIRIT in imparting life, these remained, and will remain as fresh and full as ever, even unto the end of the world.

There are two portions of Holy Scripture to which I would here direct you, because they bring out the inner power of Confirmation. First, S. Paul's statement, "Now He which stablisheth us with you in CHRIST, and hath anointed us, is GOD; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."[1] The special point in this text on which I wish you to dwell, is the "*sealing*." The term was used by the Israelites in reference to Circumcision. It was the stamping on the Israelite the mark which connected him outwardly and visibly with GOD. The

[1] 2 Cor. i. 21, 22.

sealing was placed upon him, on his very flesh, to be the visible stamp and character before the world of the elect people of GOD. You know well that those Jewish ordinances were external, and are to be distinguished from the ordinances of the New Covenant, which have grace accompanying them. On this account S. Paul speaks of Circumcision "in the flesh,"[1] that is, in the outward nature of man, as opposed to the Circumcision "of CHRIST."[2]

But although "sealing," in the case of the Jews, had an external meaning only, compared with what it has in our case, yet a similar token or mark, raised into a diviner ordinance, and connected with the gifts of grace, and a spiritual presence in the soul, is imparted now, and is of the greatest moment on two accounts.

First, Confirmation is a sealing, in such a sense that the covering and indwelling Spirit of the HOLY GHOST, first given in Baptism, afterwards increased in Confirmation, is perpetually to abide in us, as marking us off from all the rest of the creatures, from all the rest of human kind, as you might seal up something which you treasure greatly, and would keep as your own peculiar possession. GOD similarly seals us as His peculiar possession, bringing us, as it were,

[1] Eph. ii. 11. [2] Col. ii. 11.

into a secret sanctuary of His own, as He imparts and imprints on our nature His own Spirit. To feel that we are thus sealed, is as much as to say, "I am set apart,—I am a peculiar treasure of GOD,—I am marked among all creatures by a secret Presence of the HOLY GHOST, Who hath made me His own,—I am one whom He will guard, and look upon as His own for ever."

The words of the passage are, sealed "*us*." And this is important, because Calvinists, who look on Sacraments as symbols, and not as means of grace, speak only of sealing the *Covenant*, but this means something different. For to seal the Covenant, means to seal the Promise of GOD, which is very different from sealing our own personal being, to whom the promises are given. It is one thing to say, that GOD'S promises are sure, and another to say, that we are ourselves taken into Covenant. The mysterious truth is set forth in the Revelations, when the Angel is sent forth to "seal the servants of GOD," and we read of the many thousands with "the FATHER'S Name on their foreheads." This sealing thus seems to be connected with the sign of the Cross, which in Baptism is marked upon our forehead.

Secondly, observe the expression, "earnest of the Spirit in our hearts," which is a special accompani-

ment of Confirmation. The "earnest" means a pledge of what is to be, the promise of a future. It implies that all we now have is as nothing compared to that extent of power of spiritual life which we shall have, and of which this is the beginning. It is a pledge, by the indwelling presence of the Spirit now, in His comparatively embryo state, of that infinite, eternal development of power, which will be formed within the risen and ascended communion of the elect.

Further, observe that these words are all in the past tense. It is important to bear this well in mind —that all these things of which we have been speaking have been done, are our possession already; and that we are to be judged by what has been done, and given to us. We have not to look out for the coming of our new life; it has already come, and is in us. We need not always be thinking of past gifts. They may work in us unconsciously. But we are to live up to them, to be influenced by what we have received. We must necessarily give an account of how we have used what GOD has given us to keep, and to live by.

One thing more. This sealing is an indelible stamp. Having received it we can never be again what we were before. Whether we live up to this great gift, or fall away from it, we are responsible,

even as for the first gift of reasonable life. This indelible impression and condition of soul, is commonly in theological language spoken of as a character,[1] that is to say, a new form of being. It is in fact what we have become by grace, in the stead of what we originally were by nature. It means the translation even now to a higher state, so that if we fall, we shall have a heavier penalty. As baptized and confirmed persons, on whom the fulness of the Spirit has been poured forth, we are changed persons for evermore.

Thus then there are two consequences of this sealing:

1. We receive a higher grace, and

2. We are marked by a new character, according to which we shall ever afterwards be judged.

[1] "Some Sacraments are said to have what is called character. What is meant by character?

"A. Character is a certain indelible mark, which is left upon the recipient of the Sacrament.

"Q. What distinction attaches to Sacraments which have character?

"A. They are incapable of being repeated.

"Q. Which of the Sacraments have this mark?

"A. Three; namely, Baptism, Confirmation, and Orders. Baptism and Confirmation separate the baptized and confirmed from the unbaptized and unconfirmed, and dedicate and consecrate them once for all to the service and worship of GOD; and Orders separates those ordained to the ministry of the Church from those not ordained."—"The Seven Sacraments or Mysteries of the Church of CHRIST: a Catechism." By the Rev. C. S. Grueber. Parker and Co.

Further consider 1 S. John ii. 20, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." This again is connected with Confirmation, for in former times oil was used as well as the laying on of hands, it being often spoken of in Holy Scripture as the outward sign of the HOLY GHOST. The text connects oil with the power of the HOLY GHOST, "the Holy One." This image is so entirely consecrated by the usage of Scripture, that our LORD Himself is spoken of as being "anointed with the HOLY GHOST."[1] On this account the early Church used oil, as an outward symbol of the inward presence and grace of the HOLY SPIRIT. This anointing is intended to represent an illumination of the mind, an infusing of Divine truth with a fulness of knowledge. "Ye have received an unction," is regarded as being equivalent with "ye know all things." Again in v. 27, "the same anointing teacheth you of all things." It is not meant of course that aftergrowth in knowledge is not necessary for a confirmed person, but it means that through the fulness with which the HOLY GHOST visits the soul in Confirmation, the understanding becomes enlightened and enlarged, the will spiritually quickened, and the mind made capable of all aftergrowth in Divine truth. The expression brings

[1] Acts x. 38.

out also the fact, that it is not by our own natural power that we can see mysteries; as S. Paul affirms; "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of GOD."[1] That is to say, there must be a spiritual gift of understanding and power superadded to nature, to enable us to receive at all the things of GOD, and the higher mysteries of another world; and this power is given with special distinctness in the pouring out of the HOLY GHOST upon the confirmed.

Here again S. John is speaking of what we already possess. He says, "The anointing which ye have received abideth in you."[2] So we are not to look out for anything beyond what has been imparted to us, as a fresh beginning, but only for an increase of what is already ours; not even though we may have been guilty of misusing, or of failure to use, the gift of power, instead of being, as we ought, careful to develope and increase it.

You will perceive that S. John does not here speak of final perseverance. He says, "It abideth in you;" he does not say, 'Ye cannot fall away.' He thus assures us of sufficiency of power, but only if we continue in the faith, and exercise a co-operative effort on our own part.

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 14. [2] 1 S. John ii. 27.

It is indeed most important to note that in Scripture all expressions of the fulness of grace given, are spoken of as arising out of the past. We are described as "*being* justified."[1] It depends on what *has been* done. We start from the fact that a change *has* passed over us. We *are* in CHRIST, and we have fixed on us all the consequences of being in union with Him. The Sacramental gifts we have received, the holy water of Baptism, the laying on of hands of the Bishop,—these are facts speaking of life already begun. We *have* sanctification, justification, knowledge, illumination, not indeed in their full development, but in the seeds of power, capable of developing. We are to regard ourselves as already possessed of them. And in the awful future we shall be judged by what we possess. In case of wilful misuse, of carelessness and irreverence, this adds to our guilt; while yet we may treasure the assurance, the blessed encouragement, of knowing that even after failure, whenever we desire to turn to GOD, in renewed promise of faithfulness, these gifts are still our own, still in us, still capable of being used,—that we may claim them at any moment, and that they are sufficient, if used, for our eternal salvation.

May GOD give us His grace to live faithfully ac-

[1] Rom. iii. 24.

cording to this wonderful gift, and that we may have light to see, whether we have failed in any way, and, if we have failed, to make haste, lest we lose what remains of the wondrous powers of life which He has given us from the beginning of our Christian course. How miserable it is to look back on wasted powers, and abused gifts! What a wretched sense comes over the soul, whenever it realises what it might have been, if it had used its opportunities aright—if it had done this or that, which might have been done, but now cannot! In earthly things it will often be that there is no possibility of recovery of lost opportunities, and wasted powers. How many are continually mourning over the wreck of past days, hopeless of any redress! But in spiritual things this need not be. In the callings of GOD there is a perpetual power of revival. The seed of grace may at all times spring out afresh and fructify: there is no limit to forgiveness, even to the "seventy times seven." The HOLY SPIRIT never withdraws Himself, as long as there is the least desire to turn to Him. Our LORD will not quench even the "smoking flax."[1] Even the "dry bones"[2] may hear the voice of the Spirit, and arise and live. There is always hope even in the end. "The gifts and calling of GOD are without repentance,"[3] He recalls

[1] S. Matt. xii. 20. [2] Ezek. xxxvii. 4. [3] Rom. xi. 29.

them not. They live on, because He lives, the All-merciful, the All-forgiving, the All-gracious. Love dies not out of the Heart of GOD, and love embraces even to the last every soul that, mourning over past falls and negligences, desires again to "lay hold of the hope that is set before us."[1] Yet the solemn warning remains; "My Spirit shall not always strive with man."[2] And while we are bidden to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling," we are assured that "the night cometh, when no man can work."[3]

[1] Héb. vi. 18. [2] Gen. vi. 3. [3] S. John ix. 4.

III.

Penance.

BAPTISM, followed by Confirmation, gives a completeness of life, in which we might live, if we were perfectly faithful from the beginning. We should then need no other aid but the great Sacrament of the Eucharist, to feed and increase that life. If we were perfectly true, corresponding to the grace of GOD always, we should need only Baptism, Confirmation, and the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, that the soul might live peacefully with GOD. But GOD foreknew that we should not always live in perfect health of soul, any more than in perfect health of body, and He provided a means through which there might be a restoration of grace, when lost or weakened. And it is under this aspect that we are to regard the Sacrament of Penance, sometimes spoken of under the term Confession, though Confession is only one part of Penance.

Let me repeat what I before said as to the difference between the two greater Sacraments, and the lesser Sacraments, of which Penance is one. Baptism and the Eucharist are, as explained in the former Instruction, necessary for all. These two Sacraments incorporate us wholly into CHRIST and the life of CHRIST. The lesser Sacraments have only special blessings attached to them, particular graces for particular needs. Confirmation is not necessary for life, as Baptism is, but for those who, having been baptized, need the increase of the Spirit, so that they may live in the full grace of their Baptism. The Sacrament of Penance would not be necessary at all, if the Baptized always kept their baptismal grace in perfect purity. It has only a particular grace attached to it, the cleansing of sin, and renewing of grace lost or lessened by sin.

Let us turn to what we may gather from the Holy Scriptures as to this Sacramental ordinance. We must look back to the Old Testament, and see what GOD appointed for the Israelites. Take the fourth chapter of Leviticus. We there learn that if there had been sin against the Covenant, and the Israelite sought forgiveness and restoration to its full privileges, the way of return was always open to him through the appointed ordinances. Thus, e.g., for cer-

tain offences it was ordained as follows: "It shall be when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing, and he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD for his sin which he hath sinned," &c.[1] There was also an appointed prayer which he was to say at the same time, as he laid his hand on the head of the victim; "Thus and thus have I sinned." The meaning of the act was this. There was a substitution of the animal for the sinner, so that the punishment due to himself because of sin, fell upon the head of the substituted victim. He transferred, as it were, the guilt of his sin to the victim. The offering was accepted by means of the priest taking the blood of the victim, and sprinkling it around the altar. The whole act was of course typical, but it represented a more perfect cleansing which would afterwards in the better covenant be fulfilled.

The animal slain represented CHRIST, our LORD, the true Victim. The placing the hand on the animal's head, represented the sin of the offerer being laid on CHRIST. As the offending person thus identified himself with the victim, it was an expression of faith, such as we make in our confessions of sin, as trusting in CHRIST to bear away the penalty of our sin.

[1] Levit. v. 5.

The priest taking the blood of the victim, and offering it, represented the priest applying the virtue of the Precious Blood to the penitent. These confessions of sin, and assurances of being accepted by GOD through the offerings of victims, for the purpose of restoring spiritual life and the benefits of the Covenant, run through the early Scriptures in detailing the history of Israel.

If we look to the beginning of the Gospel, we there find S. John Baptist baptizing those who turned to him to receive the benefits which he was sent to declare in the coming of CHRIST. He speaks to them of the sinful condition into which they had fallen. He came preaching the Baptism of Repentance, and through this they were to be prepared for the coming of the Messiah. It was an intermediate stage between the Jewish and the Christian Covenant. Through his preaching and ministry men were to be prepared for the change; and the means of preparation was, Repentance. They came to be baptized by him, "confessing their sins."[1] Thus the idea implanted in the minds of the Israelites was, that when, from grievous sin, they desired to turn to GOD, to be restored to His favour, they were to be prepared to receive this grace and blessing by confessing their

[1] S. Matt. iii. 6.

sin, and acknowledging the guilt which was on their souls. And this belief of theirs received a very special seal, confirming it by a peculiar significance, power, and sacredness, when our LORD Himself came to S. John amongst these penitents. He came as one confessing sins. In His case, I need hardly say, it was confessing the sins of others, not His own,—the sins which He was taking upon Himself, as the substitute for sinners. But as He appeared in the form of a sinner He took upon Himself the shame and humiliation, which attached to those who confessed on their own account; He thus, as He said, desired "to fulfil all righteousness."

You may further observe how our LORD continued to act with reference to these ordinances of Israel. Though He came with absolute power to cleanse, and by His own single word could give perfect life and perfect healing, He still preserved the ordinance appointed for the purpose of cleansing, and maintained it as a necessary part of the appointment of GOD, even though He Himself was personally present to impart grace and healing by a direct act of power.

We see this shown very remarkably in the history of the cleansing of the leper.[1] You are aware that

[1] S. Matt. viii. 4.

leprosy was a peculiar affliction which had a special significance with regard to sin. It was taken out from among the ordinary sicknesses of mankind, and stamped as a mark of uncleanness of soul to be dealt with by a special ordinance.

No physician among the Jews ever healed the leper. The priest, or rather GOD by the ministration of the priest, alone could heal him. As soon as leprosy appeared on a person the leper was isolated, not because the malady was infectious, for it is supposed not to have been so, but as being under a curse, as the type of sin; and the leper was to be dealt with only religiously, not physically or medicinally. Strict laws for this purpose were laid down at great length, by which the Priest dealt with him. It was by the application of many significant rites through the ministry of the Priest, that he was cleansed, and when the Priest declared him clean, he was restored to the society and communion of the elect people of GOD. Dealing with the leper was in fact dealing with the sinner. And the mode of dealing with him set forth symbolically the interior dealing with the sinful soul.

Our Blessed LORD by a preternatural exercise of His own inherent power, cleansed a man of his leprosy. But that was not enough. Our LORD pro-

ceeds to say, "Go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded."[1] The man was to go according to the ordinary rule to the Priest, to be inspected, and after this to be declared clean, and obliged to make his offering as an acknowledgment, and act of thanksgiving, and this rite was to be observed even though he was healed by our LORD Himself. There was, even after the man was cleansed, the outward ministration appointed in the law, and the proper sacerdotal declaration of his cleanness, to be administered before he could claim the promise attached to it.

Having thus seen how our LORD dealt with this typical system, let us next consider His own appointment in the New Covenant as to this promised grace of cleansing.

JESUS had died, had offered the Sacrifice for our sins. He had shed the Precious Blood, and had risen again. And see what then happened. Immediately on His rising again, He gives this special charge, to His Apostles, with the special promise; "As My FATHER hath sent Me, even so send I you." And when He had said this, "He breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the HOLY GHOST. Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose-

[1] S. Matt. viii. 4.

soever sins ye retain, they are retained."[1] Observe first of all the time, when this commission and promise were given. You know that our new life is given to us through His Resurrection, through our LORD'S Risen Life applied to and infused into us. We are cleansed through the efficacy of His Precious Blood shed upon the Cross. What JESUS does for us, and what is necessary for our salvation, is the cleansing from sin, and the restoration to life. The full force of the Commission we are considering, can be understood only by observing the time when it was given. It was when He had perfected His Sacrifice that He gave this Commission. It is thus shown to be intimately connected with the imparting of the blessing, which He had just obtained for man. The one was the immediate consequence of the other. Moreover, observe how the words conveying the promise, are intimately connected with the imparting of the HOLY GHOST. "Receive ye the HOLY GHOST; whosesoever sins," &c. Therefore it was in the power of the HOLY GHOST that the act was to be done. It was not a mere declaration, as in the case of the leper, which was merely a typical ministration, but this ministerial act in CHRIST has life, as have all the ordinances of the new Covenant. What I mean is,

[1] S. John xx. 23.

that our LORD brings out the power of this ministry of the remission of sins, by connecting it with the gift of the HOLY GHOST imparted after His Resurrection.

We have to bear in mind that the gifts of the HOLY GHOST are manifold, and are manifested variously according to the different ends for which they have been imparted. Thus the HOLY GHOST is given in the Ordination of a Priest for his ministry to have efficacy. It does not make him good; it is not a gift of sanctification; but it is a gift of the HOLY SPIRIT for a special end, for a living application of his ministry to the souls of others. It is therefore quite distinct, e.g., from the gift in Baptism or Confirmation, which is for the person himself as to his own personal life. In the case we are now considering the gift of the HOLY GHOST is for the distinct purpose of the remission of sins being applied. It is not of course the minister himself, who is enabled to impart this blessing; but GOD, working through his ministry. He is but an instrument. The HOLY GHOST works through the outward act of those whom He commissions for the purpose, and the gift of the HOLY GHOST is to make his work saving to the souls of others.

There are two points therefore to bear carefully in

mind in this important matter. First, that the minister is not the giver of the gift, but GOD through him; and secondly, that the gift is not a mere outward declaration, but an inward imparting of grace.

Further, we have to consider what is meant by "remission of sins." It might seem at first that remission of sins was merely the cleansing away of sins, and implied no gift beyond. But the term, as used in Scripture and the Prayer Book, implies a further grace. It implies a power to live better, a renewal of life, in consequence of being freed from the bondage of sin. It is thus used in the Baptismal Service, where the prayer for the grace of this Sacrament is, that the child "may receive remission of sins by Spiritual Regeneration," evidently implying newness of life as well as forgiveness. And in the great Prayer of Oblation, in the Holy Eucharist, "remission of our sins, and all other benefits of His Passion," as evidently imply the fulness of life. In both cases alike by "remission" is meant strength to serve GOD better, as well as forgiveness,—a real gift of the HOLY GHOST, Who is "the LORD and Giver of Life," and Who acts on the soul in the administration of Penance, as in the greater sacraments.

One more point must be observed. The expression, "Whosesoever sins ye remit," &c., brings out

the thought of individual life. The words are not employed in a general sense. "Whosoever" implies individuality, an application to individual persons. And this is in accordance with the whole idea of the Evangelical life, that we are not dealt with in the mass, but every single soul is dealt with individually. "Whosoever" may need it, each one alone, singly, separately, is cleansed of sin and renewed, even as each one is separately baptized, confirmed, converted to GOD, fed at the Altar. GOD deals with each individual soul, as if there were no other in the whole world. To whichever individual soul in the Body of CHRIST this ministry of "remission of sin" is applied, the grace of renewed life is also given.

Further, we have to consider what is the sign of forgiveness, and by what means this grace is applied. The grace of remission of sins is applied variously. The promise is fulfilled by every means in which grace works in the soul. First, it is applied in Baptism, for in Baptism the full remission of sins is imparted. It enters also into all our ministrations so far as the forgiveness of sin is imparted through them. But absolution is the special Sacramental ordinance appropriated to this grace. We may trust that a certain measure of this promised grace is conveyed through the absolution pronounced in the public services.

Those who are truly penitent, having confessed their sins in a general way, may take this assurance as in a general sense applicable to them. But the Church has held from the beginning that only when applied personally and individually, after special confession of sins, this ministry has its full intended effect.

The commission to minister this grace is given to the Priesthood in our Ordination Service; "Receive the HOLY GHOST for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of GOD, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." This is the foundation of the assurance of the promised grace to be imparted in Absolution. In the Service for the Visitation of the Sick, we are told how this ministry is to be applied. There the very words are given which the Priest is to employ; "Our LORD JESUS CHRIST, Who hath left power to His Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of His great mercy forgive thee thine offences; and by His authority committed unto me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the Name of the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST. Amen." These solemn words are to be said over the penitent after he has made "a special confession of his sins, if he feel his

conscience troubled by any weighty matter," and "if he humbly and heartily desire" to be absolved. Thus the Church determines the application of the absolving grace to the individual soul after personal and individual confession of sin by one truly penitent. The act implies and conveys, according to the promised gift of GOD, the cleansing away of the stains of sin, and a renewal of life by the HOLY SPIRIT.

Moreover, the Church clearly teaches what are the cases in which, according to its ordinary use, this Sacrament of Penance applies. It is when grace has been lost, when the light of regeneration has been obscured, and the peace of the soul gone. In such cases of deadly sin we know no other sacramental means specially ordained for the restoration of the lost gift. The Fathers were wont to speak of it as "a Second Baptism." They meant that it supplied the grace given in Baptism, and which had been lost. It has always been considered the restorative means, instituted to make good this loss, and ordinarily to be sought in the case of deadly sin; and of special value, as an outward visible means of an inward spiritual grace. Where the sin is less grievous, where there is still continued communion with GOD, and a living in grace, though weakened and injured by faults or infirmities of more ordinary kind, then the use of

this means of grace has not been so urgently pressed. With us it is in all cases left to the free choice of the soul, whether to use it or not, because without the free will of the penitent it cannot be acceptable to GOD, or good for the soul. But while this freedom is secured to us, in every case there is a difference according to the degree of sin, whether it be more or less grievous, as to how far confession should be urged. But it is surely right to bear in mind that such an ordinance exists, that GOD has provided a special remedy for cleansing and renewal of life, which He has promised to bless, and which, when used aright, brings with it as its appointed grace an assured peace and restoration of spiritual life. Whenever our souls are troubled, our consciences disturbed, it must surely be well to consider whether such a remedy may not be good for oneself, whether the grace of GOD, which we need, might not come to us through this ordained means. The responsibility of judging in this case rests on each individual soul.

It is this earnest consideration of our case which the Church urges upon us when, in the Exhortation to Holy Communion, it speaks as follows, in words which you cannot but remember. After speaking of direct confession of sin to Almighty GOD in secret, the Church goes on to say, "If there be any of you

who by this means cannot quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth further comfort and counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned minister of GOD'S Word, and open his grief," (that is his sin, which grieves his conscience,) "that by the ministry of GOD'S Holy Word he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness."

I have already observed how in the case of the leper the Priest was to consider the condition of the spots of leprosy from time to time, to see when the leper was cleansed. So likewise in the Christian covenant the Priest has to judge whether the individual soul be in a condition to receive the benefit of absolution, such absolution depending upon the truth of the repentance, when the spots of sin are shown to him, when the confession of sins is made. It is only by the full acknowledgment of the sins committed, that the truth of the repentance can be judged. It is GOD Who hears, and GOD Who acts, and GOD Who forgives, but He is pleased to use the minister as His instrument, that according to the law of Sacraments the outward visible sign may attest the truth and reality of the inward spiritual grace.

While describing the ministry which has mercifully

been ordained, as a pledge and assurance of reconciliation with GOD after sinning against Him, it is not meant that there may not be acceptable repentance and assured forgiveness without using it. Sorrow for sin may be so real, love so fervent, trust in JESUS so entire, that there can be no doubt of the forgiveness and acceptance with GOD. He works in manifold ways ; and the soul knoweth within itself the voice of the LORD, calling it to Him and making it His own. Only may we be earnest in seeking His grace, that He may bless us according to our need, and enable us to receive all the benefits of His covenant of mercy, which He has so lovingly provided for us in our weak state, ever ready to perish. May we judge ourselves, remembering that we must all meet His searching Eye, and our hearts be laid bare in His Presence. There is a promise to those who "look well to see if there be any way of wickedness in them," that they shall be spared the terrors of the last scrutiny. The present care will save the future loss. The passing trial will free us from a deeper sorrow, opening the way to an endless peace.

IV.

Holy Orders.

HOLY Orders is one of the lesser Sacraments, which have been spoken of as instituted for special persons, or certain states, and so is to be distinguished from those Sacraments which are necessary to salvation for every one, as the two greater Sacraments alone are. Holy Orders is for particular persons selected out of the body of Christians to minister to their brethren.

The Priesthood is the highest order of the ministry, and is intended to carry out a system of mediation, or an intermediate agency between GOD the Source of grace, and the persons to whom grace is to be given. All Priesthood is derived from CHRIST Himself, the SON of GOD, Who is Himself the true High Priest, the Mediator between GOD and man, and is alone the All-sufficient Minister of Divine Life to His brethren

in the flesh. But inasmuch as He is invisible, and dwells above this lower order of existence, and the Sacraments need visible forms, and grace is given through outward means, therefore He needs representatives, that is to say, persons who will act for Him, as hands, and feet, and voice act for the mind and will; instruments, who can give the outward visible pledge and symbol of the invisible grace, derived from JESUS Himself, and of which He, through them, is the true Giver. He Himself gives the inner grace, His earthly representatives give only the outer sign and pledge. Men are ordained to be the visible representatives of the invisible Priesthood of CHRIST.

There have been from the beginning two lines of Priesthood, one typical, which was instituted in the Old Testament, the other, the antitype which arose with the New Covenant, and which alone conveys the real and inner truth. Even during the earlier Scriptures this true and real Priesthood of the Christian Covenant was exhibited in a very mysterious person, Melchisedec. That he represents the Christian Priesthood is clear from S. Paul's statement in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where he says that JESUS was "made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."[1] This, as S. Paul says, had been prophesied in

[1] Heb. vi. 20.

the Psalms, "The LORD sware and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."[1] The spirit of the Priesthood of Melchisedec seems to have lived on as an under current, giving hope of mercy during the whole period of the Levitical Priesthood, which itself could only typify.

If we look back to what characterised the Priesthood of Melchisedec, we shall see that it is distinguished by two characteristic functions. You remember the circumstance under which Melchisedec comes upon the scene, in the Book of Genesis.[2] Abraham was returning from a victory over the heathen kings who had spoiled Lot, and attacked the chosen seed in the persons of Abraham's family. There was to be in consequence of this victory an act of thanksgiving. For this he "brought forth Bread and Wine." As Abraham represents the faithful of all ages, so the Priest who represented the Priesthood of all ages, came forth to meet him on this great occasion. There can hardly be a doubt as to what was meant by bringing forth "the Bread and Wine,"—it was an Eucharistic act, a type of the abiding Sacrifice of the Eucharist; and it was evidently connected with Priesthood—an act of Sacrifice, and not a mere meal. The words which immediately follow explain the act, "And he was

[1] Psalm cx. 4. [2] Gen. xiv. 18.

a Priest of the Most High GOD." Our version does not exactly express the original. Instead of "and" we should read "for," as giving the reason. The text should be, "*For* he was a Priest of the Most High GOD." This explains why he brought forth "the Bread and Wine," and how he, being a Priest, was the proper person to make the offering. This was the chief function of Priesthood, and then as accompanying this, he "blessed" Abraham, another function of the Priesthood. The blessing was connected with Sacrifice, as in our Eucharistic Service we have first Sacrifice, then afterwards Blessing. This is the only instance of the exercise of this order of Priesthood in the Old Testament.

But in order to understand this higher, truer priesthood which we exercise now under the New Covenant, it is necessary to consider the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood, which was typical of this, and which was, until our LORD came, the appointed means of communion with GOD.

This typical priesthood was originally in the heads of families, and afterwards in one of the Jewish tribes. Before the time of Moses and Aaron, the Priesthood was the attribute of the eldest born of each family in Israel, that is to say, the head or chief of the family offered sacrifice, and prayer, and gave the blessing, on behalf of the other members. Thus we read of

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob acting as Priests. Because they were the elder born, or the elder by choice, they exercised the functions of ministry for the rest of the family. Afterwards the Priesthood was transferred from the heads of each family to a particular tribe, and the tribe of Levi was chosen. The priesthood continued in this tribe. There was ordained to be a lineal succession from father to son,—the sons of Aaron alone ministering as Priests, the rest of the tribe acting as subordinate ministers.

There were three offices appointed for the Priests. The first, as is already said, was Sacrifice. This among the Israelites was the continual, the daily act of the Priest,—first in the Tabernacle, afterwards in the Temple, ceaselessly carried on throughout all the ages of the Mosaic Covenant. None but the Priest could offer the sin-offering, or sprinkle the blood. And none but the High Priest, as representing the true High Priest, CHRIST Himself, went up into the Holy of Holies, within the mysterious Veil. He alone entered, none with him, carrying the blood of the victim to sprinkle it before the Mercy-seat, a type of the entering of JESUS CHRIST into the Heavens, to offer His Blood before the FATHER. The High Priest represented the Person of JESUS CHRIST, but the other Priests, sons of Aaron, represented the order of

ministering Priests who were to act as ministers under JESUS CHRIST, according to the prophecies of which you read in Holy Scripture,[1] as to the continuance of the Priesthood on earth, to be fulfilled in the Christian Priesthood. These subordinate Priests offered sacrifice in the court of the Temple, which represented the earth, as the Holy of Holies, in which the High Priest alone ministered, represented Heaven.

Another function of Priesthood is the ministry of forgiveness, or the applying the benefit of the Covenant to the souls that had committed sin, and in penitence confessed it. According to the Levitical law, any one who had committed sin, and desired to be forgiven, brought a victim to the door of the Tabernacle, and laying his hand on its head, said, "I have sinned in this thing," &c., by that act mystically transferring his guilt to the victim, which was then killed, either by the man himself, or by the minister, and then the Priest sprinkled the blood around the Altar, as the appointed means of offering it to GOD, in order to restore the sinner to His favour.[2] This was the type of what we now call Confession and Absolution. The penitent man came to acknowledge his sins, and offer the sacrifice for his reconciliation. So any one now who repents his sin

[1] See Isa. lxvi. 20; Jer. xxxiii. 18. [2] See Lev. iv., v.

under the New Covenant, lays his sin on the Head of the true Victim, JESUS CHRIST, and confessing his sin before Him, asks of Him the sprinkling of the Precious Blood to cleanse his soul from guilt. The visible sign and pledge of this grace is the act of the Priest giving absolution.

The third function is Blessing. The very words in which the Blessing was appointed to be given under the Old Covenant, were appointed by GOD Himself.[1] The Blessing was threefold, that is to say, it was to be given in the Name of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. "The LORD bless thee, and keep thee, the LORD make His Face to shine upon thee, the LORD lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." The manner of giving the Blessing was, that after the sacrifice had been offered by the Priest within the Temple, he came from the Altar to the door, and standing there, spreading out his hands over the people, he blessed them in the appointed form.

You will observe that the principles of priestly action which were fulfilled by the sons of Aaron, are the same as those which were performed by Melchisedec, in regard at least to two chief functions,—Sacrifice and Blessing.

[1] Numb. vi. 24.

I have said, the Priesthood of Aaron was "typical." I do not mean that it was altogether without virtue, for no doubt the acts of ministry among the Israelites had a certain benefit, according to the promises of the Covenant, but not according to the fulness of grace pledged to us under the New Covenant. There was, no doubt, according to the faith of the worshipper, under their typical forms a pleading of the true Sacrifice, that was to be, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."[1] It had its effect by anticipation even before the Sacrifice was actually accomplished to those who believed, though not its full efficiency of virtue until after He had hung upon the Cross.

And now let us come to the appointment of JESUS CHRIST Himself, His own appointment of what we call Holy Orders, as now administered. We shall find that, as in the case of the Levitical Priesthood there were three chief acts of ministry, so the Christian Priest is commissioned to discharge three similar functions.

There is, first, the act of sacrifice. We are commissioned to offer the Memorial of the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of CHRIST slain upon the Cross, which He Himself offers continually in Heaven, and which is by us commemorated and represented on earth.

[1] Rev. xiii. 8.

It is the great Eucharistic Sacrifice, which the Priest of the New Covenant alone can offer. I shall speak at another time to you of other parts of the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist. Here I am speaking only of this one part, its sacrificial character.

In instituting the Holy Eucharist, our LORD said to His Apostles, "This do in remembrance of Me." And these words have been understood by the Church to mean, "Offer this Sacrifice as a memorial of Me, as I now offer it before your eyes." The Priest offers the Bread and Wine, and according to what our Prayer Book and Catechism assure us, with the Bread and Wine are mystically present the Body and Blood of CHRIST. The Priest on earth representing CHRIST in heaven, as the steward of His mysteries, makes the "memorial offering," as he afterwards communicates the blessed gift of the Body and Blood of CHRIST.[1]

[1] If any one should doubt whether the term, "do this," can be understood to mean, as stated in the text, "offer sacrifice," I would refer to S. Luke ii. 27, where we read how "the parents brought in the Child JESUS, *to do* for Him after the custom of the law," and what is meant by this is explained in the previous verses, 22—24, where we read that "they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the LORD, and to *offer a sacrifice* according to that which is said in the law of the LORD, a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons." I may be allowed to add a quotation from a note on p. 84 of "The Doctrine of the Priesthood in the Church of England." "For the use of this term ποιεῖτε, or 'do,' in the Septuagint, see among numberless

This is one function of the Priest,—another of which I spoke last week is the ministry of the Forgiveness of sin, or Absolution. S. John records what our LORD said when He ordained this ministry; "Receive ye the HOLY GHOST: whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto thee."[1] On this I need not here dwell, as it is spoken of in the Instruction on Penance, but you will readily see how it expresses the similar function of the Mosaic Priest,—the penitent bringing the victim, confessing his sin, and the Priest offering the victim and sprinkling the blood. In like manner our LORD, in His commission of the Priesthood, declares the promise of GOD to bless the application of His Precious Blood to the person who truly repents, and to whom sin is remitted in the appointed ministry.

And the third function of the Priesthood is Blessing. There is not in the Gospel any form of words given for this, as there was in the Mosaic Covenant, but S. Paul speaks of it as a Priestly act.[2] He is

passages, Exod. xxix. 36—39; Levit. vi. 22, ix. 7, where in our version it is translated 'offer;' Exod. x. 25, where it is translated, as in the Gospels, 'do.' . . . . The corresponding Latin word, 'facere,' had the same meaning; and as ποιεῖν was used by the Greek Fathers to denote the oblation in the Eucharist, so 'missam facere' is the phrase commonly used by the Latin Fathers to express the same. 'Facere' in the Vulgate is the version of ποιεῖν in the Septuagint, and both correspond with 'do' in our version."

[1] S. John xx. 23. [2] 1 Cor. xiv. 16.

describing the services of the Church as they were then conducted, and he represents the minister "blessing with the Spirit;" and he himself at the end of one of his Epistles gives one form of blessing which has always been used in the Church; "The grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the love of GOD, and the communion of the HOLY GHOST, be with you all."[1] Portions of the same form of blessing occur at the end of other Epistles, and the fuller form of blessing used at the end of our Eucharistic Service is also composed of different passages from S. Paul's Epistles.[2]

Thus, then, we see a Priesthood always existing on earth. First, the Priesthood of the elder born of the family; then Melchisedec's Priesthood, just showing itself in the person of Melchisedec, though afterwards withdrawn, as it were, from sight and living on unseen; then the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood, continuing till the coming of CHRIST; and then finally, JESUS CHRIST Himself, coming as the true Melchisedec Priest, offering the true Sacrifice under the forms of Bread and Wine, first typified by Melchisedec. Afterwards as JESUS, the true High Priest, ascended into Heaven to offer His own Blood, He appointed as representatives of Himself till He return, to act under Him, a continuous succession of Priests, ordained for

[1] 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

[2] See Phil. iv. 7.

this end, to carry on His ministry by constant individual acts, men taken from among men, to minister to men. They are nothing in themselves, not acting in their own name, nor in their own power, but simply as instruments. They yet offer, however unworthy, His invisible Sacrifice; they apply His invisible Absolution; they impart His invisible Blessing. They are to continue thus to act even unto the end, visible signs and pledges of His inward spiritual graces.

There are two points on which we may thankfully dwell: the wonderful mercy of GOD in giving, through outward instruments, the visible assurances and seals of His grace, thus keeping up continually a conscious communion with Himself in the unseen world, and the giving to us at the same time the light of His HOLY SPIRIT to see Himself working through these instruments, as we feel within ourselves the power and consolations which He imparts. Through the outward signs we recognise the inner grace.

Thus the visible and the invisible become one; the two worlds meet. While the veil is drawn between us and the Holy of Holies, yet it is rent by faith, and we see through it. It is scarcely possible, while we are passing through this outward scene of material visible things, but that we should need the help of visible in-

struments. We are ourselves made of body and spirit. Both parts, body and spirit, need their proper means of support. GOD works in both through instrumentalities proper to both. The eye of sense and the eye of faith have their proper objects on which to dwell, as the needs of both are met by the concordant action of the outward sign and the inward grace. And thus we are prepared for the time when the heavens shall flee away, and the perfected spirit, seeing GOD "as He is," shall live in the fulness of the apprehension and the sensible blessedness of eternal things, where GOD is All in all.

V.

The Holy Eucharist.

I.

LET us to-day consider the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. But as it consists of two parts, which ought to be viewed separately, I would divide the subject, taking one part to-day, and deferring the other for my next address. The two parts are Sacrifice and Communion.

Let us to-day consider the sacrificial aspect of the Holy Eucharist, which indeed comes first in order in the institution of that great Sacrament. But before speaking of the sacrifice of the Eucharist, it is necessary to say what sacrifice means.

Sacrifice means offering, oblation, or gifts, something given by one dependent on another to that other,—it is the acknowledgment of being another's and giving oneself wholly, or at least giving what is part of the whole, to represent the whole. It is

according to this idea that from ancient times subjects approached their sovereigns with gifts, as a necessity for obtaining admission to their presence. And in all ancient worship the idea of offering something to be accepted, is of the essence of worship, and is felt instinctively in human nature, derived no doubt by tradition from the very beginning of the creation. It is exemplified in every worship that has ever existed, as the very first duty of the creature, forming the highest and truest worship of all.

On this account, and as occurring first in the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament, our own Catechism first speaks of its sacrificial character. The first question asked is, "Why was the Sacrament of the LORD'S Supper ordained?" The answer given is, "For the continual remembrance of the Sacrifice of the Death of CHRIST, and of the benefits which we receive thereby." The "remembrance of the Sacrifice" is to be made before we approach to share its benefits, as subjects might bring their gifts to the king before approaching the throne.

We have, therefore, to consider what "the remembrance of the Sacrifice" means. It might be supposed to mean an act of the mind calling up the thought of our LORD'S Sacrifice, and dwelling upon it. But this cannot be meant by the word in this case, because we

ought always to remember the Sacrifice of the Death of CHRIST. S. Paul said he would not "know anything, save JESUS CHRIST and Him crucified."[1] This subjective feeling, this inward recollection, is taught us as what ought to be the habitual state of a Christian's mind and heart; he can never be wholly without it. It is impossible, then, that the solemn offering of the Holy Eucharist should be nothing more than the bearing in mind a truth, which is the very groundwork of a Christian's life.

A similar word is used in the great prayer of Consecration, where it is said that the Blessed Sacrament was instituted for a "perpetual memory" of CHRIST'S "precious Death," which we are commanded "to continue," "until His coming again." It is doing what His own words required to be done when He said, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

This offering "in remembrance of Me" will be better understood if we consider the sacrifices of the Old Testament, which were appointed to be the types of our Eucharistic Sacrifice. It was a common use in these sacrifices, while one part of the thing offered was eaten by the Priest or the worshipper, to lay another part of it on the altar, to be offered to GOD, and this part was called "the memorial of the LORD,"

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 2.

"an offering made by fire of a sweet savour to the LORD."[1] Our LORD used a word well known to an Israelite when in instituting the Blessed Eucharist He bid His Apostles "do this in remembrance of Me." It was to be "a memorial offering,"[1] partly to be offered to GOD, partly to be eaten by the worshipper. It will the better illustrate the subject, and show the close connection between the Blessed Sacrament as a Sacrifice and the well known sacrifices of Israel, which are very instructive as types of it, if we consider more particularly the offering specially here referred to, that of the "minchah." The Israelite was to take "fine flour," "pour oil on it," and then add "frankincense" to it.[2] The "oil" represented the

[1] See Levit. ii. 2, 9, v. 12, vi. 15, xxiv. 7. In the last passage the very same word is used as our LORD uses, *εἰς ἀνάμνησιν*; in the other passage it is *μνημόσυνον*, a cognate word with similar meaning.

The Bishop of Lincoln in his Commentary, referring to the passage quoted from the Book of Leviticus, as explanatory of our LORD's words in His Institution of the Blessed Sacrament, says, "Do this in remembrance of Me," or, "for the commemoration of Me," or, of "My Sacrifice" offered on the Cross, and for the continual representation of it before GOD on earth, as it is perpetually pleaded before Him by our great High Priest in Heaven with the incense of prevailing prayer; that He may remember that sacrifice, and for its sake be gracious and merciful to His universal Church."—*Preliminary Note to* Levit. ii.

[2] Levit. ii. 1, 2.

HOLY SPIRIT according to the usual Scriptural imagery, as the sanctifying principle of the offering, and the "frankincense" represented prayer accompanied with the meritorious efficacy obtained by CHRIST'S atoning Passion on our behalf. Then the Priest took a handful of the fine flour and burnt it on the Altar. That was GOD'S part, and the remainder of the offering was to be the food of Aaron and his sons. It was a case of Sacrifice and Communion united, and the character of the Sacrifice is that of a memorial offering, representing the rest which was partaken of.

Here we have a figurative representation of our Altar offering. We lay on the Altar the memorial of the Sacrifice of CHRIST. The oil is there, for the HOLY SPIRIT sanctifies the elements, the bread and wine are there, and there is also the frankincense, for the whole merits of CHRIST are with it, imparting to it its acceptableness with GOD the FATHER.

In order to enter into the full importance of what is here said, it must be borne in mind that Sacrifice has run through the whole history of redemption from the beginning. It is not indeed mentioned in the Book of Genesis as having been expressly appointed, but no doubt there was such an appointment, and that it was revealed to Adam and Eve on their fall

as the necessary means of their return to GOD, because we find that it was commenced at once by their children. Abel offered the acceptable offering,—a lamb of the flock, which represented the Lamb of GOD Who was to come at the fulness of time to take away the sin of the world. We learn from this that the use of Sacrifices is coeval with humanity, nor has there ever been a religion without Sacrifice as a main material part. Wherever the Patriarchs sojourned in their wanderings, wherever they stayed, though it might be but under an oak tree, they at once raised their Altar. The mysterious Melchisedec, as we have seen, came forth as if out of another world to offer sacrifice. On this same principle was formed the great system of the Levitical Law, with its many daily sacrifices. It is not my purpose to enter into the details of this vast array of sacrificial ceremonies, but it is instructive, as well as interesting, to show how that system of sacrifice is still in part living on with our own spiritual offering,—how part of what was appointed for the Israelites remains to us as the outward form of our Eucharistic Sacrifice. In the Peace-offering, which most resembles our Eucharist, together with the animal slain, there was also, as we have seen, the "fine flour," part of which was burnt in the fire on the Altar as "a memorial,"

and the rest eaten by the Priest and the worshippers. With us animal offerings have ceased, because the true Lamb has come, and has offered the One Offering for sin, but the "fine flour" remains in "the bread," as the "outward symbol" of the Body of CHRIST. And with the "fine flour" of the offering of Israel "wine"[1] was also poured forth, which also remains as the outward symbol of the Blood of CHRIST. The animal sacrifices have ceased, because they have been fulfilled in the One Offering of JESUS CHRIST; what accompanied them, is continued on, only raised to a higher meaning and purport, as the "outward visible signs" of the true Victim for sin.

There is a Prophecy[2] which declares that this was to come to pass. When Malachi had rebuked the Israelites for their faithlessness in offering to GOD what was worthless, he goes on to show that a time would come when their sacrifices would cease; that there would be a new Covenant, with new sacrifices,—"From the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, My Name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My Name, and a pure offering." "In every place;" no longer in the one temple on Mount Moriah, but throughout Catholic Christendom, on

[1] Exod. xxix. 40; Levit. xxiii. 13. [2] Mal. i. 11.

every Christian Altar; and no longer animal sacrifices, but the "Minchah," the pure offering, as distinct from their animal sacrifices. This "pure offering" of bread and wine was, according to the Prophet, to extend itself from Jerusalem over the whole world, to be united, no longer with the typical animal, "the blood of bulls or of goats," "which cannot take away sins," but with the very Body and Blood of CHRIST, which He ever pleads for us before the FATHER in Heaven, and which we offer continually as "a memorial," in remembrance of Himself, as He commanded us, on earth.

S. Paul teaches us that "as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the LORD'S death till He come."[1] "Show," that is to say, proclaim, exhibit the memorial sacrifice of His Passion to the FATHER, and to the world; "show" it as an offering, in union with the Sacrifice of Himself, the Body offered for us, and the Blood shed for us, together with the benefits that we receive from Him, and this to continue until "He come again." Just as our LORD in the Heavens, standing ministering before the Throne in the Heavens, on the Right Hand of the FATHER, offers Himself, and ever liveth to "make intercession for us," pleading His Precious Sacrifice; so

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 26.

we keep up on earth, in union with Him, the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the Offering on our Altars, which He instituted to be a perpetual representation of His own Offering. What He is doing in Heaven, this we are doing on earth, whenever we duly celebrate the Holy Eucharist.

It is thus we plead most effectually the merits of the Cross; it is thus we draw out of the wells of salvation the virtues of His Passion; it is thus we apply the atoning grace which ever flows from His wounded Side. It is the appointed means of making His Sacrifice effectual to us, or, through our intercessions, to others for whom we pray. It is here in this mystical service that we bring our gifts to GOD, and uniting them to our LORD'S Offering of Himself, make them acceptable through this union with His Offering. And while we thus draw near, and make our offering, our Heavenly FATHER looks down upon us from on High, through the veil, that is to say, "the flesh of CHRIST," and accepts and blesses us "in the Beloved," because we are then one with Him, and are seen only as being in Him. May it be ours thus to abide, and thus for evermore to rest in peace, waiting for our perfect transformation in Himself in the Day of His gathering together His Elect in the one Communion of His Saints.

VI.

The Holy Eucharist.

II.

WE come to-day to consider the second part of the great Mystery of the Holy Eucharist. Last Friday we dwelt on the Sacrifice, which, as was then explained, takes the first place in the institution, and is followed by the Communion, according to the law, which prevailed in the Levitical sacrifices, which foreshadowed the Eucharist, namely that the worshipper must first offer, and then partake of the offering. But Communion was the main end of the Institution, that we might partake of CHRIST, as the food and increase of our immortal life; and this is therefore absolutely necessary if we would receive the benefits which His sacrifice obtained for us.

We have seen in the former Instruction, that among the Levitical sacrifices the Peace-offering was the

most like to our Eucharist. The account of what was done in the ministry of this offering is written in Levit. iii. and vii. There the participation is described as the end to which it looked. First GOD Himself had His share. He partook of what was offered to Him, as a sign of His acceptance of it. "The priest," it is said, "shall burn it upon the altar; it is the food of the offering made by fire unto the LORD." GOD is mystically represented feeding upon it, to make it His own. From this old sacrificial use may have arisen one aspect of S. Paul's description of GOD, as "a consuming fire;" as one who desires to unite all things with Himself at any cost of trial and self-sacrifice. What was offered to Him was lost to sight on earth, and was taken up symbolically into GOD Himself. Then next the Priest partook of his portion. "Of it he shall offer one out of the whole oblation for an heave-offering unto the LORD, and it shall be the priest's that sprinkleth the blood of the offerings." (vii. 14.) He first raises it, before he consumes it; raises it as an offering to GOD, and then it is his own to feed upon. Now the Priest represents the Mediator, as acting between GOD and the people; and so next to the satisfaction of GOD, is the satisfaction of the Mediator; as it is written; "He shall see of the tra-

vail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."[1] The offering of His people, as they are faithful, in offering themselves, their souls and bodies to Him, is the food of the Mediator. And then next (vii. 16,) the people receive their portion; whosoever offers is fed. Thus all are bound into one by a common participation. GOD and His people become one through the action of the Mediator, represented by the Priest; a deeply mysterious communion, through which our life pervades both worlds, the life of GOD and the life of man, having a common bond in the one accepted offering.

In this same account in Leviticus we are told of the preparation of heart necessary for such Communion; "The soul that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace-offerings, that pertain unto the LORD, having his uncleanness upon him, even that soul shall be cut off from his people." (vii. 20, 21.) There must be cleansing before partaking, and as it was the sharing of a Divine Communion, so the profanation of receiving unworthily involved excommunication, "the being cut off from GOD'S people," as the fitting consequence of such a daring act. It was therefore the custom for those who were about to offer a peace-offering, to offer previously a sin-offering for their cleansing, as in our Communion

[1] Isaiah liii. 11.

Office there is a special confession and solemn absolution, as well as an exhortation to all who approach the altar, "to examine themselves" before they presume to draw near.

A remarkable direction is added as to the consumption of the offering, which is believed to have a mystical meaning in application to the Holy Eucharist. "And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is offered, he shall not leave any of it until the morning." (v. 15.) This injunction is evidently metaphorical, even as the whole ordering of the peace-offering is highly mystical. The "day" is the day of grace: the night, "when no man can work;" "the morning" is the beginning of the new life, the Resurrection state. The meaning is that the food of the sacrifice should be partaken of even until the evening of the present dispensation of grace; and should then cease to make way for a higher communion which should follow in a higher world. The offering of His sacrifice and the feeding on the Victim in Sacramental mystery, was to continue until He should come again, until the "morning" of the Risen Life, when the shadows would flee away, being the end to which we should look, as the result of feeding on CHRIST.

The teaching of the Peace-offering, therefore, is very instructive, if we thus realise its details. Let me repeat more concisely what has been said. First the offerer draws near to the Temple of GOD, bringing his offering. The Priest offers the sacrifice on the Altar,—of this GOD receives His portion, and the Priest also has his share, and then the offerer partakes of the sacrifice which has been accepted of GOD. Thus in our Eucharist. First the offering is made to GOD. The charge is, "Do this," i.e., offer this as "a memorial," or in "remembrance of Me." Thus GOD has His portion, as the true satisfaction for sin; the Priest then receives, and he is the representative of the Mediator, in Whose Name he offers, and Who is "well-pleased" in the fruits of His redeeming Sacrifice; and then the people who had brought their offerings and joined in the Sacrifice, receive of the Sacrifice, even the Body and Blood of their LORD, thus partaking of His Fulness.

As before in types, so now in reality, a Divine Communion is thus accomplished through the "full, perfect, sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction offered for the sins of the whole world," and the elect of GOD who have been permitted to approach His Altar, and to feed upon Him Who offered Himself for them, are bound together with Him in closest

fellowship of the same eternal life, to be one with the FATHER, even as He and the FATHER are one. "As Thou, FATHER, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us."[1]

The necessity of a previous cleansing before partaking of the Peace-offering,—the risk of excommunication being incurred by approaching in uncleanness, has been already referred to; and is not this also a type of that solemn witness of S. Paul, that "whosoever shall eat this Bread and drink this Cup of the LORD unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the LORD. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the LORD'S Body."[2] Damnation here, according to the original sense of the term, means condemnation, or judgment, or loss,—not the extreme penalty which the word now implies. It evidently implies very serious, though not absolutely fatal, consequences.

And here we come across a mystery, which has proved a difficulty to many, namely, the reception of the wicked. Let me observe on this solemn question, that it is in the passage just quoted expressly

[1] S. John xvii. 21. [2] 1 Cor. xi. 29.

implied that the wicked do receive; but the point to be considered is, in what way, and what, do they receive? So far seems clear, that what the worthy and the unworthy receive, is the same. The same is given to each alike. The being "guilty of the Body and Blood of the LORD," arises from receiving them unworthily. The ground of their guiltiness is that they receive, "not discerning the LORD'S Body," not distinguishing between the LORD'S Body and other food, treating It as if It were a common thing; receiving It in an unclean state, unprepared, unbelieving. To receive merely the outward forms, merely the bread and wine, would not involve the guilt implied. Some awful consequence of coming in intimate contact with our LORD Himself in an unworthy state, is evidently intended.

What our Article says is not that they do not receive CHRIST'S Body and Blood, but that they are not "partakers of CHRIST."[1] In order to understand this distinction we must consider what is meant by the term "partaking of CHRIST." To *partake* of CHRIST is a scriptural term, as where we are said to

[1] Article XXIX. "The wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, yet in no wise are they partakers of CHRIST: but rather, to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or Sacrament of so great a thing."

be "partakers of the Divine nature,"[1] that is to say, filled with Divine life and power. And thus S. Paul says, we are "partakers of CHRIST, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end."[2] So again GOD is said to chasten us "for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness."[3] The word thus used implies a beneficial reception, a reception unto life, and a real union with CHRIST. This, as our Article declares, unworthy communicants cannot receive. The inward life and saving grace is lost to them, and instead the contact with the All Holy strikes them with a penal judgment, as S. Paul records of certain persons in his own day, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep,"[4] bodily afflictions having been in that case to some among the people the grievous consequence.

Among the special benefits partaken of in the worthy reception of the Holy Eucharist, there is one that I would wish to particularise,—it is the gift which

[1] 2 S. Pet. i. 4. [2] Heb. iii. 14. [3] Heb. xii. 10.

[4] 1 Cor. xi. 30. Bp. Wordsworth's comment on the "many sleep," is as follows:—

"κοιμῶνται. He (S. Paul) does not say κεκοίμηνται, the term which he uses to describe the rest of the Saints who *have fallen asleep* in JESUS, (1 Thess. iv. 13,) but κοιμῶνται, a tense which (though sometimes used to signify a *state* of sleep . . . .) is less expressive of a permanent con-

prepares us for our resurrection. Our Communions plant within us the seed of the new body in which the faithful will rise in glory. We receive our LORD'S Body in the powers of Its glorified state, that we may put on at last the very "fashion of His glorious Body," this body of our humiliation being transformed after His likeness. Our LORD Himself attributes the cause of the change to our Communions. "If," He says, "any man shall eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever, and the Bread that I will give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." And again more especially, "Whoso eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."[1] The very clothing of the ransomed soul as it will come forth in glorious beauty in the day of its resurrection, is forming in us now. Our very resemblance to the outward appearance of the Son of Man in His beauty, is forming in us in

dition of rest than κεκοίμηνται. Perhaps κοιμῶνται here may mean simply *are dying* . . . ., and this Christian euphemism describes the mortality then prevailing at Corinth, and does not pronounce an opinion as to their *state after death*."

In a previous note Bp. Wordsworth alludes to "an epidemic" as at the time prevailing at Corinth, and adds, "Who but an inspired writer would have dared to say that an epidemic is sent from heaven *for a particular cause*, unless he had been instructed to this effect by a revelation from heaven?"

[1] S. John vi. 51, 54.

substantial reality, as we habitually receive Him in His sacramental communication of Himself.

There yet remains to be mentioned a distinguishing feature of this great Sacrament,—the adoration connected with it, such as does not attach to any other Sacrament. Why is this? It is because not merely grace is given through Its ministration, but the very Author of grace in some deep preternatural mystery is present within It. Our LORD Himself cannot be separate from His Body and His Blood Which are thereby given; and this Presence, though hidden from mortal eye, is the object of Divine worship. His special Presence, though invisible and inscrutable, constitutes this sacrament to be the very centre of worship within the Church. We kneel in supplication and prayer; we kneel as receiving Divine gifts in the reception of the grace that is conveyed in other sacraments, as in Confirmation and Holy Orders. But beside and beyond this we kneel before the Altar, not merely to receive grace, but as recognising the very Presence of our LORD. When the Holy Eucharist is celebrated it is as though the veil were withdrawn, and the Holy of Holies opened before our eyes, and we adore the Presence of the Holy One, Who sitteth between the cherubims, throned on His Mercy-seat.

We are now approaching the end of Lent, and are soon about to commemorate the great Festival of Easter. I would remind you of the special call to communicate at that Festival. The Rule of our Church, putting the times when all its members should communicate at a *minimum*, is that, "Every parishioner shall communicate at the least three times in the year, of which Easter to be one."[1] Throughout Catholic Christendom to communicate at Easter has ever been the prevailing rule, even should it unhappily have been the only communion. The reason for so marked a custom is evident, and it practically exemplifies what has been stated as to the vital power of Holy Communion. It is because Easter is the Festival of the Resurrection, and the life received in Holy Communion is the Risen Life of JESUS,—Himself in the Power of His Resurrection, communicating to His own Elect the substance and the virtues of His own precious Body and Blood in His triumph over death. May you approach then on this great day with due preparation of heart—with faith quickened by the HOLY SPIRIT to "discern the LORD'S Body," with ever renewed desire to persevere in the preservation of your fellowship with Him in this great Mystery, that life within you may grow onward with hope

[1] See the first Rubric at the end of the Communion Office.

full of immortality, "a life hid with CHRIST in GOD."[1] And let it not pass away with the Festival Season. Let it rather be your continuous use, your constant supply of Divine nourishment, that by degrees your whole being and your daily course may be influenced, your whole inward self leavened with the virtue flowing out from your LORD'S abiding Communion of Himself, that when He cometh He may find you ready to enter in at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, to share His bliss and His glory for ever.

[1] Col. iii. 3.

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